

Lobelia Benefits in Herbal Preparations

by Rosanna King

Brought to you by [The School of Natural Healing](#) & [Christopher Publications](#)

Contents

HISTORY OF LOBELIA, Part 1	2
HISTORY OF LOBELIA, Part 2	12
LOCATION OF LOBELIA.....	23
CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS OF LOBELIA	25
MEDICINAL QUALITIES OF LOBELIA	27
CONTRA-INDICATIONS OF LOBELIA	30
KNOWN HERBAL FORMULAS OF LOBELIA	32
DOSAGES AND APPLICATIONS OF LOBELIA	47
LOBELIA - PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.....	52
LOBELIA - BIBLIOGRAPHY	56
Addendum from The Eclectic Materia Medica, Pharmacology	60

HISTORY OF LOBELIA, Part 1

Praised and revered by some and feared and despised by others, this plant has quite the history. In fact the history of this plant's use and the controversy surrounding it, is what intrigued and drew me into writing this thesis on it.

Lobelia was very popular with the Native Americans (commonly referred to as Indians). They ranked it high in their *materia medica*, and set such store by it that it was an article of trade among them. Several tribes reported to have used it are the Penobscot, Cherokee, Iroquois, Shoshone and Crow. The Cherokee mashed the roots of lobelia and used them as a poultice for body aches. The Iroquois also used the root, to treat venereal diseases, ulcers, and leg sores. The Crow used the plant in religious ceremonies. [1]

The Indians used lobelia inflata in several ways and for a wide range of complaints.[2] They valued its diaphoretic properties ranking it high in their *materia medica* as a perspiration inducer.[3] As an expectorant, lobelia was considered an acceptable runner-up to extract of gumwood, which was their favored expectorant.[4] The Indians certainly didn't miss the most famous property of lobelia, that of an emetic. They used the "puke weed" to induce vomiting as a therapeutic modality. To them it was no big deal; they took emetics as frequently and casually as white folk take a laxative. The Shoshones are one tribe known to have used lobelia tea as an emetic.[5] Lobelia was even used as a relaxant, especially for squaws during labor. There was a difference of opinion among them though; whether lobelia or blueberry tea was the more efficient relaxant. The antispasmodic tea was made from the root and said "*to be the great medicine that squaws use at the birth of their children.*"[6] In brief, recorded history shows that the Indians knew and utilized the emetic, diaphoretic, expectorant, relaxant and antispasmodic properties of the herb, known today as *lobelia inflata*. [7]

Prepared as an infusion they used it for asthma and catarrh, for relief from chest pains, as a tonic after influenza, and as a remedy for intestinal worms and venereal disease.[8] For external use they smashed the leaves and applied it as a poultice to the side of the neck to treat an abscess. The leaves were rubbed on sores, aches, stiff necks, and chapped places.[9] The common names, Indian tobacco and wild tobacco give reference to yet another way the Indians used lobelia medicinally, perhaps their favorite; smoking. They smoked the leaves for sore throats, coughs, asthma, bronchitis and other lung ailments.[10]

Lobelia inflata was not the only Lobelia used by the Indians. Great Blue Lobelia (*L. siphilitica*) and Cardinal flower (*L. cardinalis*) were used as well leading to

some confusion since then concerning the different species and their use by the Indians. Some Herbals state that the Indians used the different lobelia species; *L. inflata*, *L. siphilitica* and *L. cardinalis* interchangeably for the same purposes. After a closer look at the various pieces of information and attempting to piece it together I disagree at least in part. Part of the confusion is very likely due to the fact that plants in the same family do often share medicinal properties and uses and lobelia is no exception. [11] References to uses of the root may well be referring to Blue Lobelia (*L. siphilitica*) or Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) rather than *Lobelia inflata*. Many old herbals declare that the root of *L. inflata* was never used in medicine but these are certainly no authority on Indian use of lobelia as many of them deny that the Indians ever used it (*L. inflata*) for medicine.[12]

The great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) was used by the Iroquois in the North as a remedy for syphilis. Success with using lobelia as a vermifuge led to experiments with it for venereal disease. Sir William Johnson, superintendent of Indian affairs in North America from 1756 to 1774 and a friend of the Iroquois, purchased samples of the great blue lobelia, known as “the Indian’s secret cure for syphilis”, from the Native Americans and sent it to Europe. He introduced it as a drug of great repute in fighting that disease. European physicians failed to affect a cure with it and cast it aside. Nevertheless, the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus, believing it justified the Indian representation, labeled the plant *Lobelia Syphilitica*. The reason for the failure in Europe may have been that the Indians always used lobelia in conjunction with other herbs with which it was decocted, such as cherry bark.[13] Lobelia combined with New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus fendleri*) dried and ground to a powder was used to dust syphilitic sores.[14]

Lobelia syphilitica was also used as a tonic by the Indians after an influenza attack.[15]

Cardinal flower (*L. cardinalis*) was used as an emetic and an expectorant just like lobelia inflata and the root by the Cherokee Indians in the South as a cure for syphilis. But it was never valued as highly as the more potent Indian Tobacco (*L. inflata*).[16]

The use of Lobelia as a medicinal plant did not end with the Indians, the white man found it worked in healing their diseases as well as it did for the natives. As the white man used lobelia, he gave it various English names some referring to its emetic properties; puke weed, emetic herb, emetic weed, gag root, vomit wort; and still others referring to Indian use, wild tobacco, Indian tobacco; what it was good for, asthma weed, eyebright; and the shape of the seed pod, bladderpod.[17]

I enjoyed the discussion on the common names that I found in King’s American Dispensatory, (1898) so well that I decided to quote most of it here. “*The earliest*

botanists did not use a common name for lobelia, and it was not until 1810 that we find the first popular name – Bladder-pod – given it by Aiton. Following this came Inflated lobelia and Bladder-pod lobelia for obvious reasons. So much for names suggested by the plant itself. When it came to be used in medicine a new set of popular names having reference to its properties, were applied. Thomson and Cutler called it Emetic weed and Emetic herb. These names suggested those to follow – Puke weed, Vomit weed, and Gag root. Although the term gag root was employed, the root was never used in medicine, statements to the contrary notwithstanding. One of its very old names is Eye-bright – a name properly belonging to *Euphrasia officinalis*, and, from its use as an anti-asthmatic, some writers have referred to it as *Asthma weed*.”[18] As you can see, this plant has some very interesting names and as we continue you will realize it has an even more interesting history.

No history of lobelia, short or lengthy, is complete without a short history of the man who made lobelia famous. The son of a poor and illiterate farmer from Alstead, New Hampshire, Samuel Thomson [1769-1843], an unorthodox herbal practitioner, brought lobelia into widespread use as a medicinal agent. Lobelia along with steam baths was the mainstay of his patent medicine. He said of lobelia “*the Emetic herb . . . is the most important article I make use of in my practice.*”[19]

Though there are records of lobelia being used in folk medicine by the people of New England before he was born,[20] Samuel Thomson discovered its emetic properties on his own while yet a child. Being naturally very curious about plants, at the age of four, he noticed lobelia and wanting to know more about this “new” plant picked and chewed some of the pods. In his own words “*The taste and operation produced was so remarkable that I never forgot it.*” After this he would often induce other boys to chew it, merely in sport, to see them vomit.[21]

Since he had never observed any bad effects produced by lobelia, his simple experiments eventually led him to the discovery of the value of it in disease.

“*The herb which I had first discovered when four years old, I had often met with; but it had never occurred to me that it was of any value medicinally, until about this time [1791-1794], when mowing in a field with a number of men one day, I cut a sprig of it, and gave it to the man next to me, who ate it; when we got to the end of the piece, which was about six rods, he said he believed what I had given him would kill him, for he never felt this way before. I looked at him and saw that he was in a most profuse perspiration, being as wet all over as he could be; he trembled very much, and there was no more color in him than a corpse. I told him to go to the spring and drink some water; he attempted to go and got as far as*

the wall, but was unable to get over it, and laid down on the ground and vomited several times. He said he thought he threw off his stomach two quarts. I then helped him into the house, and in about two hours he ate a very hearty dinner and in the afternoon was able to do a good half day's labor. He afterwards told me that he never had anything do him so much good in his life; his appetite was remarkably good, and he felt much better than he had felt for a long time." Later while recounting this experience Thomson wrote *"This circumstance gave me the first idea of the medicinal virtues of this valuable plant; which I have since found, by twenty year's experience, (in which time I have made use of it in every disease I have met with, to great advantage), to be a discovery of the greatest importance."* [22]

When the doctors could do nothing for his daughter who was sorely afflicted with the "canker-rash" or his wife who nearly died after giving birth, Thomson cured them using steam baths and herbs by following his own instincts and the little knowledge he had. As neighbors learned of his success with his family and other neighbors they began to call for Thomson rather than the regular doctor. Being unable to care for both his farm and the many sick folks who called on him for help he made the big decision to quit farming and devote his life to the betterment of mankind.[23]

Thomson's drastically simple approach to medicine was not without opposition though. Why? you may ask. And I must say for the most part for two very simple reasons. The first being that with his simple remedies, including lobelia, people were restored to health who had been declared hopeless cases by their doctors proving his method of treatment and his remedies better than theirs. Thomson did not even have a grade school education, and certainly no medical degree, that he should affect a cure when they could not was too difficult a pill to swallow. Secondly, Thomson was quite vocal as to what he thought of the fashionable modes of practice at the time, such as bloodletting and giving mercury and other metals. In return they circulated all kinds of false and ridiculous reports about him and his practice to destroy his credibility.[24] Thomson went on to patent his form of medicine of which lobelia was the No. 1 remedy, and form the Friendly Botanic Society. Those who purchased rights to the use of his medicine became members of this society.[25]

I must admit my short history of Samuel Thomson, has become rather long of which I should feel I must apologize but for the fact that Thomson did so much good by way of lobelia that it is only fair that a portion of his life's story should be included along with the story of lobelia. If you wish to read more of this great man read his autobiography for yourself or J.U. Lloyd's account "Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson", I am sure you will find it very interesting.[26]

Lest I should fail to even mention the name of the one who first wrote about lobelia I will tell you here. The introduction of lobelia into medical practice is at least in part due to Dr. Manasseh Cutler. Some unwilling to credit Thomson with discovering it and bringing it into practice have ascribed the whole honor to Cutler. Cutler was the first to publish its use in his “Account of Indigenous Vegetables” printed in 1785 after having proved it effective in giving more relief from asthma than any other remedy. Very likely he learned this use from Thomson who practiced near his home in Massachusetts.[27]

Thankfully the use of lobelia did not die with Samuel Thomson, if it had; I fear I would know nothing of this wonder working herb. The newer more “respectable” medical systems of Eclecticism and Homeopathy, though much more sophisticated than Thomsonian Medicine did not frown on lobelia. Dr. King made this statement “Few drugs are more favored among Eclectic physicians than lobelia”[28] They even utilized some of the Thomsonian remedies such as the antispasmodic tincture of lobelia, skunk cabbage and capsicum; and No. 6 which was comprised of lobelia, myrrh and capsicum.[29] Not content to use lobelia only in the way Thomson did, after extended and persistent experimentation they came up with what they considered a nearly perfect fluid preparation for hypodermic use. To their delight they found Subculoid lobelia as they called it, had an uplifting action with very little of a nauseating and emetic effect.[30] Homeopathy founded by Samuel Hahnemann and brought to the United States by Dr. Hans B. Gram recorded *Lobelia inflata* as a proven remedy in their first volume published in the U.S.[31]

Following in Thomson’s footsteps, Jethro Kloss (1863-1946) and Dr. Christopher (1909-1983) used and valued lobelia as a potentially “miracle working” herb. Both gave more space to lobelia than any other single herb in their herbals “*Back to Eden*” and “*School of Natural Healing*” respectively.[32] Jethro Kloss quoted others extensively in praise of lobelia including Drs. Thomson, Scudder, Lyle, Greer, Stephens, Butler, Nowell, and Hool. He himself wrote “*Lobelia is one of the most extensively used herbs and is used chiefly as an emetic or in pulmonary complaints such as bronchitis, croup, whooping cough, asthma, etc., antispasmodic, stimulant.*”[33] Dr. Christopher fondly referred to it as the “thinking herb” since it works as a catalyst (to enhance or direct action) helping other herbs do their job and seems to know which way it should go in the body and what results it should effect.[34]

I have spent considerable time discussing those who used lobelia especially Samuel Thomson but very little as to how they used it and for what purposes. The list of ailments it has been found useful in is quite long. Here is a list arranged alphabetically taken from the “School of Natural Healing” by Dr. Christopher.

“Medicinal uses: Abscesses, adynamia (weakness), angina pectoris (heart excitability), asthma, blood poisoning, blood circulation problems, boils, bronchial problems, bruises, catarrh, chicken pox, cold sweats, colds, colic, congestion, constipation, convulsions, cough, cramps, croup, digestive disturbances (nervous dyspepsia, acute indigestion, etc.), drowning, dyspnea, diphtheria, earache, eczema, epilepsy, fainting, febrile troubles (fevers), felons, female problems, heart weakness, hepatitis, hydrophobia (mad dog bites), hysteria, inflammations, insect stings and bites, laryngitis, measles, meningitis, nephritis, nervousness, palpitation, peritonitis, periostitis, phrenitis, pleurisy, pneumonia, poison ivy, poison oak, rheumatism, ringworm, scarlet fever, smallpox, spasms (spine, muscles, chest, or genital organs), sprains, stomach irritation (small doses), tetanus (lock jaw), vomiting (small doses), whooping cough, and zymotic diseases.”[35] This is Dr. Christopher’s list but I have found most if not all of these uses in many herbals written by various authors. Not many herbs have this long a list of ailments beneficially affected by them.[36]

Let’s go into a little more of the details on lobelia, one of the most widely used herbs in nineteenth-century America with its use extending to the present time.[37] The dried tops and leaves of Indian Tobacco were listed in official drug botanicals from 1820 to 1936, and appeared in the *National Formulary* until 1960. “The Favorite Medical Receipt Book and Home Doctor” published in 1903 has this to say in regards to lobelia *“Exceedingly valuable in asthma, croup, whooping cough and pulmonary diseases generally. The leaves, seeds and inflated capsules may be given in the form of powders or tincture. A dose of the powder is 1-5 grains; of the tincture, 10 to 20 drops. In asthma the dose should be repeated in about half an hour if the paroxysm continues. For croup, teaspoonful doses of the tincture are recommended to be taken in connection with warm drinks of some simple herb tea until vomiting occurs.”*[38]

Those who used lobelia found that lobelia rapidly influences all parts of the body, being of a highly diffusive nature. Alone, lobelia can accomplish little, but given with other herbs is exceedingly beneficial. The authors of the “Model Botanic Guide to Health”, quoting Thomson, wrote *“The effects of lobelia may be compared to a fire made of shavings, which will soon go out unless other fuel be added; cayenne therefore, may be said to keep alive the blaze which the lobelia has kindled.”*[39] Dr. Christopher bore testimony to his own and many other herbal doctors’ practical experience, by stating *“It is a good rule to always give a stimulant before administering lobelia, or to combine a stimulant with it.”* More specific rules of use are *“When used as a relaxant, do not combine with cayenne or goldenseal, but with a more diffusive agent such as ginger. When used as an*

emetic, lobelia should be preceded with a stimulant tea such as peppermint or cayenne.” –“School of Natural Healing”[40]

As it is a catalyst herb helping other herbs work better it has been combined with a large assortment of herbs for a variety of conditions. An example from “Back to Eden”, *“the acid tincture can be added to horehound, hyssop, sage or other teas, or may be added to the composition tea in doses of a teaspoonful to a cupful of the herb tea for cough, asthma, colds, etc.”* Pleurisy root, a specific remedy for pleurisy, was bettered with the addition of lobelia because of its relaxing properties.[41]

Throughout history it’s most common use certainly has been as an antispasmodic and expectorant in treating asthma and other disorders pertaining to the lungs such as coughs, bronchitis, whooping cough, pneumonia, croup, etc.[42] Dr. King, an eclectic, wrote *“For this class of diseases no remedy is more highly valued by physicians of our school”*[43] A specific for the lungs both internally to calm spasms and open passages, and as an emetic to throw out mucous obstruction, rapidly clearing the air passages of the lungs of sticky or adhesive foreign matter.[44] I like the way the authors of “The Model Botanic Guide to Health” put it *“There is no other medicine that is half so effective as lobelia in removing the tough, hard, and ropy phlegm from asthmatic and consumptive persons.”*[45]

Lobelia is not limited to internal use. The authors of “The Medicines of Nature” wrote, *“We have also used the acid tincture as an external application, rubbing it between the shoulders and on the chest in asthma and have found it most helpful. Dr. H. Nowell uses this regularly in this manner and has had some surprising results in cases where the breathing has been most difficult.”*[46]

Americans continue to use lobelia in the 21st century to treat asthma and other respiratory problems with good results. Richo Cech, owner of Horizon Herbs says *“Lobelia is of irreplaceable assistance in addressing chronic, debilitating cough and other lung-related problems such as asthma and emphysema.”* Many former asthma sufferers wholeheartedly agree.[47]

I must tell you a few stories to illustrate. A Dr. Butler after suffering for ten years from asthma and trying a variety of remedies with little results had this to say after using lobelia. *“The last time I had an attack it was the worst I ever experienced. It continued for eight weeks. My breathing was so difficult that I took a tablespoonful of the acid tincture of lobelia, and in about three or four minutes my breathing was as free as it ever was. I took another in ten minutes, after which I took a third, which I felt through every part of my body, even to the ends of my toes, and since that time I have enjoyed as good health as before the first attack.”*[48]

Dr. H. Nowell was asked to help a case of asthma where the regular doctors could do nothing. *“To stop the cough,”* they declared, *“would stop the patient.”* She was so severely afflicted with asthma, during attacks she would tear at her throat, fighting for breath. Both she and her husband begged their doctor to help but he said nothing could be done till after the child was born, as she was seven months pregnant with their first child. Dr. Nowell gave the husband a one-ounce bottle of the acid tincture of lobelia with the instructions *“that a teaspoonful be given when the spasm came on, . . . a second teaspoonful ten minutes later . . . if necessary.”* Almost immediately after taking the first dose she *“brought up long, thick masses of phlegm from the lungs the size of a man’s fist.”* She never had any more trouble with asthma.[49]

My favorite story of all as it so aptly illustrates the tremendous good that lobelia is capable of doing for those suffering from asthma is one of Dr. Christopher’s. One night after Dr. Christopher had already been up for most of the night due to house calls, he heard a knock at the door. Two young fellows had brought their asthmatic father because his regular doctor was not available. Dr. Christopher gave him a cup of peppermint tea, fifteen minutes later a teaspoonful of lobelia tincture, ten minutes later another teaspoon dose and ten minutes later a third. He then began to throw up, and as Dr. Christopher put it, *“During the time that the emetic principle was working and bringing up phlegm from his lungs and bronchial cavities, he ejected over a cupful of varicolored materials, ranging from light to dark, plus other liquids.”* Though he was carried in, he walked out. For the first time in twenty years he slept in bed despite his boys claiming it would kill him. Now that all the mucus was out of his lungs he could breathe and he knew it. The very same week he went out and got a job as a gardener after being too sick to hold a job for twenty years. He had been on heavy medication with no hope of ever getting well. This is only one story of the great good lobelia did in the skillful hands of Dr. Christopher for many asthma suffers. He never had to use more than three teaspoons of the tincture of lobelia, because he was usually called during asthma attacks. He did not mind because he said *“That is the best time to clear the ailment”*. I.e. in one night asthma cured, after suffering 27 years.[50]

[1] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 202; Grieve, A Modern Herbal, page 495; USDA NRCS Plant Guide, page 1.

[2] Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, page 108

[3] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 202 and 154.

[4] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 166 and Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, page 108.

[5] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, pages 202, 164 ;Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, page 108.

[6] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 138.

- [7] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 202, 166, 138; Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, page 108.
- [8] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 202; Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, page 108.
- [9] USDA NRCS Plant Guide, page 1
- [10] Foster, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants and Herbs, page 207, Reader's Digest, Magic and Medicine of Plants, page 132
- [11] Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, p. 108;
http://altnature.com/gallery/Blue_Lobelia.htm.
- [12] King, King's American Dispensatory, 1898, History of lobelia,
www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html
- [13] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, pages 202, 281, 136; Reader's Digest, Magic and Medicine of Plants, Gallery of Medicinal Plants, page 132
- [14] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 217
- [15] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, page 192, 202
- [16] Reader's Digest, Magic and Medicine of Plants, Gallery of Medicinal Plants, page 132
- [17] Christopher, School of Natural Healing , chapter 10, Lobelia, p. 394.
- [18] King, King's American Dispensatory found at www.henriettesherbal.com.
- [19] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica , series 7, No. 11, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, pp. 10-12.
- [20] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library, Series 4, No. 18, 1911, History of the Vegetable Drugs of the Pharmacopeia of the United States, Lobelia, p. 78.
- [21] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica , series 7, No. 11, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, p.12.
- [22] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica , No. 11, series 7, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, p. 17
- [23] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica , No. 11, series 7, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, p. 17-20, 23-24
- [24] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica , series 7, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, p. 21, 24, 25, 26
- [25] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica , No. 11, series 7, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, p. 27, 66, 72
- [26] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica , No. 11, series 7, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson.
- [27] King, King's American Dispensatory, 1898, found at www.henriettesherbal.com; Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library, no. 18. Series 4, 1911, History of the Vegetable Drugs of the Pharmacopeia of the United States, p. 77.
- [28] King, King's American Dispensatory, 1898, found at www.henriettesherbal.com.
- [29] Ellingwood, American Materia Medica – ch. 1 Special Nerve Stimulants, p. 15.
- [30] Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, Lobelia, p. 275, 277.
- [31] Griggs, Green Pharmacy, ch 20, pp. 170-172, 219.
- [32] Kloss, Back to Eden, p. xi, section 2, pp 141-152; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, book jacket, ch 10. pp 393-403.
- [33] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142, 143
- [34] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 395.
- [35] Christopher, School of Natural Healing pp. 396-397.
- [36] Kloss, Back to Eden, pp. 142-152; Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist, p. 198; King, King's American Dispensatory, 1898: Lobelia.
- [37] Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants, p 207; Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 12-13.
- [38] Goodenough, The Favorite Medical Receipt Book and Home Doctor, department 5, p. 569.
- [39] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 142, 144, 151; Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library, No. 11, series 7, 1909, pp 27, 28.
- [40] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10 pp. 397, 401.
- [41] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 146, 142.
- [42] The Medicines of Nature, Back to Eden, Back to Eden
- [43] King, King's American Dispensatory found at www.henriettesherbal.com

- [44] Kadans, Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs p. 148, and Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist p. 198
- [45] Kloss, Back to Eden, p. 151.
- [46] Kloss, Back to Eden p. 145
- [47] Cech, Making Plant Medicine, part 2, p.167; Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 13; Olendorf, The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, 1999, v. 2, p. 795.
- [48] Kloss, Back to Eden p. 145
- [49] Kloss, Back to Eden, p. 144.
- [50] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10 pp. 401-402, Christopher, Herbal Legacy of Courage pp. 58-60; Christopher and Gileadi, Every Woman's Herbal, p. 8

HISTORY OF LOBELIA, Part 2

The use that most of lobelia's common names refers to is certainly a main use; that of an emetic. It is this very property which has an expectorant affect in pulmonary complaints that makes it so useful in asthma.[1] Mr. Hool, a nineteenth century herbalist, said *"In . . . mucus and spasmodic croup the tincture must be administered promptly and in full teaspoonful doses in warm water and repeated at intervals of every ten or fifteen minutes until free vomiting ensues, as it is necessary in all such cases to induce complete relaxation of the system, by means of full emetic doses repeated at suitable intervals."* According to "The Medicines of Nature" the acid tincture of lobelia is *"extremely useful as an emetic when one feels that the stomach should be thoroughly cleansed"*. Favored over ipecacuanha, a common emetic of the day, herbalists felt lobelia was, *"as kind and destitute of all hazard as ipecacuanha, though it is more efficient"*, *"not only cleansing the stomach but having a beneficial influence over every part of the body."*[2]

Though lobelia is an excellent emetic, it is a strange fact that when given in small doses for an irritated stomach, it will stop spasmodic vomiting. A fact not so strange when you realize that it has been used as a nerve/muscle relaxant for generations.[3] *"Spasmodic movement is incompatible with nervous and muscular relaxation, hence we find prompt relief in many spasmodic conditions by the use of this drug."* –"King's American Dispensatory".[4]

The Native Americans believed in afternoon tea, generally herbal drinks which the settlers came to call "relaxers". Priddy Meeks, who had accompanied Brigham Young on the great hegira, developed a modest compositae of these for external application. *"To relax any contraction of the system whatever,"* he advised, *"take equal quantities of yellow dock, dandelion, burdock, and lobelia, all finely pulverized and put in eight ounces to a quart of the best alcohol. Let it stand for ten days, shake well, and use as a wash, always rubbing downward."*[5]

So effective is lobelia on the nervous system that it has been used in nearly any and all afflictions of it, controlling and quieting spasms. So safe that a few drops of lobelia tincture were rubbed on the gums of babies in convulsions to calm them.[6] The tincture or tea was given internally as well, combined with a little cayenne for the same purpose. If occurring after a meal it was recommended that enough would be given to cause vomiting. Lobelia was used to relax colicky babies by rubbing the tincture of lobelia on the spine.[7] In addition to baby convulsions lobelia has been used in treating lock jaw (tetanus), epilepsy, chorea (nervous disease with involuntary and irregular movements), cramps, nervousness, hysteria, delirium tremens, fainting, shock, heat stroke, poisoning by strychnine,

ptomaine, and toadstools, suspended animation and even hydrophobia (rabies) and worm fits.[8]

Thomson wrote, *“In cases where the spasms are so violent that they are stiff, and the jaws become set, by pouring some of this liquid into the mouth between the cheek and teeth, as soon as it touches the glands roots of the tongue, the spasms will relax, and the jaw will become loosened so that the mouth will open; then give a dose of it, and as soon as the spasms have abated, repeat it. After this, administer appropriate restorative or tonic herbs.”*[9] The Eclectics found the above statement to be true as well and utilized the oil of lobelia for the treatment of tetanus and other extreme cases finding it *“easy to introduce enough upon the tongue to relax the whole system immediately”*. [10]

Another extreme case where lobelia has been used and found effective is poisoning, intentional or otherwise. The extract has been used as an emergency measure to revive a person who has overdosed on a narcotic and in combinations to assist in overcoming drug withdrawal.[11] In one instance cited in the “American Materia Medica” (1919) a child thoroughly poisoned with strychnine was saved by thirty drop doses repeated every half hour. He had eaten one-third of a grain. Ellingwood also stated *“In every case of ptomaine poisoning, in which the agent has been used, it has covered all the indications and has proved fully successful. It has been used in many instances.”* Even those poisoned with toadstools have been saved *“In one case . . . seven individuals were thoroughly poisoned. One woman was very near death when the first injection was given. All were saved very promptly by the persistent and repeated use of full doses of this remedy. In many instances when the dose was given, the immediate effect was plainly apparent.”*-Ellingwood.[12]

If you thought lobelia has enough miraculous powers ascribed to it in being a remedy for tetanus and an antidote for fatal poisons, happily, you are wrong. Lobelia has also been used to cure or rather prevent hydrophobia (rabies) a deadly “incurable” disease. Instructions were *“Steep 1 tablespoonful of lobelia in 1 pint of boiling water and drink as much as possible to induce vomiting and cleansing of the stomach. Follow this mixture with a high enema of lobelia and catnip.”*, *“This treatment should be given immediately after the person is attacked”*. [13]

Who wants to suffer pain? not I or anyone else. Those who knew of the marvelous properties of lobelia employed it as a pain reliever as well. Dr. Christopher stated, *“People writhing in pain and rolling on the floor have been immediately calmed with the administering of one half-teaspoonful of tincture of lobelia.”* and *“Terrific pain from muscle over-exertion has been abated by massaging lobelia into the affected muscles. This relief has been so quick, patients have called it*

“blessed”. His simple explanation was *“Lobelia in combination with other herbs, quickly draws out both pain and congested blood.”*[14] Ellingwood gave a more detailed elucidation *“Lobelia relieves pain due to spasm of any character. But in its antispasmodic and relaxing influence it is not narcotic in the same sense as opium. It exercises a soothing influence over nerve irritability, and a distinct anodyne result ensues. General relief from pain often follows when other measures have failed. The pain from renal or hepatic stone is more quickly relieved by it and more permanently, often, than by morphine because of the general relaxation.”*[15]

Many women would answer in the affirmative to the statement, that giving birth has been the most painful experience in their life. The answer might well be negative if she had known the blessings of lobelia. Many births have been remarkably eased by the use of lobelia, despite the mother’s past history of difficult deliveries.[16] The eclectics valued lobelia in obstetrical practice claiming *“It powerfully subdues muscular rigidity. It is the remedy to overcome a rigid os uteri during parturition, and at the same time relaxes the perineal tissues. This it does when there is fullness of tissue – a thick, doughy, yet unyielding, os uteri; when, however the edge of the os is thin and closely drawn, sharp like a knife edge, full doses of gelsemium are indicated.”*[17] Some midwives say that a lobelia enema cuts the pain by half and tincture of lobelia can relax your whole body and your cervix enough to help in opening up. Though the above is true it is good to insert a caution here as well. Midwives have also found too much lobelia can cause vomiting and actually retard labor.[18]

Effective even for after pains, one lady after trying numerous remedies with no relief, gave this testimony *“finally I purchased some cayenne tincture (hot!) and tincture of lobelia. I put a big squirt of each, . . . into a cup of diluted grape juice, which I drank every time I felt the pains or started to nurse. I was grateful to have the cayenne and lobelia - - but more grateful when the pains finally stopped.”*[19] For others menstrual disorders may be the reason for their pain. In these cases if lobelia was used with other herbs such as pennyroyal, the pain and contraction were relieved and normalcy established.[20]

My favorite aspect of lobelia, its selectiveness, is best illustrated by the following. Dr. Christopher said, *“When a fetus is dead, or in an extremely weakened condition, lobelia will cause it to abort, However, if the fetus is well and healthy, and the mother is weak, it will cause the mother to heal and strengthen, enabling her to carry the child until the proper time of delivery. Lobelia accurately and intelligently selects which way it is to go. It is truly a “thinking” herb. With the use of lobelia, a dead fetus will be passed in abortion, rather than remaining inside the mother’s body.”* And here is a bright story to clarify just what he meant

by the above statements, *“Dr. Christopher was lecturing in a large city when a young man came up to the podium to shake his hand; he nearly shook the Doctor’s hand off! . . . His mother had told him that one night when the weather was fifty below zero, the Doctor had traveled forty miles to their home. The mother was aborting, ready to lose her baby. The Doctor had given her some herbs [no doubt false unicorn and lobelia] and saved the baby – and the young man was that baby! He was about twenty-five years old. He said, “I enjoy life. I love you, sir, and I had to thank you.””*[21]

Another quality utilized throughout the years, is lobelia’s ability to break up congestion. “The Model Botanic Guide to Health” stated, *“It tends to remove obstructions from every part of the system, and is felt even to the ends of the toes; . . .”***[22]** Two ways this quality has been used that you probably wouldn’t think of are treating laryngitis and earache. Those who used it found lobelia *“will relieve congestion of the mucous membranes and will usually give prompt relief in cases of laryngitis.”* [23] And for earache *“two drops of garlic oil followed by two drops of tincture of lobelia, plugged with a bit of cotton, often removes the pain and the congestion.”*[24] The cleansing effect of this herb has been recommended and apparently used very successfully in various liver diseases. Jethro Kloss gave these instructions *“In bad [asthma] cases where the liver is affected and the skin yellow, combine equal parts of pleurisy root, catnip, and bitterroot. Steep a teaspoonful in a cup of boiling water. Give two tablespoonfuls every two hours hot.”*[25]

As Lobelia has such a powerful effect on the muscles and the nervous system, it makes sense it has also been used as a cardio-tonic in circulation formulas. Dr. Christopher said, *“Lobelia is especially important in removing obstruction and congestion within the body, especially the blood vessels. If there is depression through the vasomotor system, it corrects this, and strengthens the muscular action of the vessel walls which propel the blood, thus being a key to health throughout the body.”* Jethro Kloss found lobelia *“makes the pulse fuller and slower in cases of inflammation and fever . . . reduces palpitation of the heart”*. [26]

The eclectics used it for a variety of heart conditions. This is what they had to say *“in acute heart failure with imminent danger, a full injection is demanded. Many lives have been saved by its peculiar sustaining influence. . . . Heart conditions depending upon feebleness or lack of tone or of muscular power should have occasional regular doses of this agent. It can be given with more freedom than any other heart stimulant. . . . The prompt and satisfactory effect of lobelia upon angina pectoris has been known for fifty years or more, the old prescribers giving it by the mouth freely and with positiveness for this disorder.”* The “old prescribers” would certainly include Thomson and his agents.[27]

The use of Lobelia as a diaphoretic goes way back to the Indians. Thomson and others after him used it to raise the internal heat of the body, inducing sweating. Colby, a Thomsonian, felt that the diaphoretic action was due to lobelia's relaxing properties. He said, ". . . *its mode of producing this effect is by relaxing, through nervous action, the contracted mouths of the emunctories or pores of the skin, and letting off the portion of the blood called perspiration.*"[28] Jethro Kloss claimed "*The use of lobelia in fevers is superior to any other remedy.*" To clarify, he further stated "*Lobelia alone cannot cure, but it is very beneficial if given in connection with other measures, such as an enema of catnip infusion morning and evening. The enema should be given even if the patient is delirious. It will relieve the brain.*"[29]

Dominion Herbal College, Lesson 26, gives Mr. Hool's method of treating scarlet fever "*I have seen in my time some of the worst cases of scarlet fever cured by the following simple treatment, even when death seemed to have set in and there has been no apparent hope of recovery. I have gone into such cases and caused to be administered one teaspoonful of the antispasmodic tincture of lobelia in a little water made warm, and given every half hour until the patient seemed easier. Then make up a good fire in the room, have clean underclothing warm and ready to put on. Then get two quarts of hot water and one quart of the best malt vinegar. Mix the water and vinegar together, bring the patient near the fire and wash the body all over with the vinegar and water and wipe dry. Put the clean clothing on and clean sheets on the bed. Put the patient back in bed and give a teaspoonful of the preparation (antispasmodic tincture) in warm tea (herbal tea) or warm water every two hours afterwards, taking care to wash with vinegar and warm water every day and Hey Presto, the patient will be on the highway to recovery. I have treated some scores of cases of scarlet fever in the above way, and never lost a single case by death.*" –Mr. Hool[30]

Lobelia poultices or the tincture was used for sprains, wounds, blood poisoning, bruises, stings of insects, and poison ivy/oak, ringworm, erysipelas and other skin diseases. Instructions to make the poultice were "Use one-third lobelia to two-thirds slippery elm bark." or "combine with an equal part of slippery elm bark and weak lye-water". Considered useful "to assist suppuration (formation of, conversion into or discharge of pus)", lobelia was added to poultices for abscesses, boils, felons, and carbuncles. Hot fomentations were used as well in external inflammations, such as rheumatism. [31]

Students at Dr. Christopher's school, suffering from some injury, such as hitting a finger with a hammer, have immediately soaked the injured part in tincture of

lobelia. This removed the pain at once.[32] The infusion or diluted tincture applied externally was often found to be more effective for relaxing muscles than internally, lending it useful for back problems where muscle tension was a key factor.[33] Because of its ability to soothe muscle soreness, particularly smooth muscle, it has been called blessed lobelia.[34]

Because of lobeline's (one of lobelia's alkaloids) chemical similarity to nicotine, lobelia was the subject of intensive research as a possible "quit smoking" medication in the 1970's. Stop-smoking products containing lobelia or the alkaloid lobeline were sold over the counter up until 1993. The "quit smoking" lozenges, patches and chewing gums were said to decrease the desire for tobacco since the lobeline salts make the nicotine taste terrible and appease the physical needs for nicotine without addictive effects. The FDA decided that there was a lack of adequate data proving that OTC smoking deterrents, including those with lobelia or its alkaloids, were safe and effective. December 1st 1993 all antismoking products containing lobeline in any form were pulled from the shelves. Herbalists continue to use the herb lobelia to help people give up smoking. Over-the-counter "stop smoking" products are still used in other countries.[35]

I've saved the most interesting part of lobelia's history for last. The controversy as to whether lobelia is a safe and miracle working herb or a deadly poison has continued for over 200 years. How could it be that the very herb that Dr. Christopher said, "*is one of the greatest herbs ever given to the world*" And Dr. Thomson "*there is no vegetable which the earth produces more harmless in its effect on the human system, and none more powerful in removing disease and promoting health than lobelia*" has been called poison? Why is it that the very herb that Thomson, the Eclectics, Dr. Christopher, Jethro Kloss and many others, ascribed nearly miraculous powers to has been called a dangerous herb even to this day?[36]

It all started with Samuel Thomson, the arch enemy, of the medical professionals of his day. Lobelia was his No. 1 remedy so when they attacked Thomson they attacked lobelia, which they called by such derogatory names as screw auger. Much of the ill-treatment Thomson received at the hands of the medical professionals, namely a Dr. French, was no doubt due to the fact that Thomson cured folks they had given up as incurable. Dr. French, after failing to ruin Thomson's practice with false reports or frighten him with threats, had Thomson arrested. Thomson was charged with murdering a man with lobelia, and thrown in prison. At his trial the witnesses that were called up against him made fools of themselves, as the medicine they claimed was lobelia proved to be marsh-rosemary which even the regular medical doctors used. Dr. French, seeing the evidence was against him, dropped all charges stating that "*the prisoner (Thomson) had practiced in the part*

of the country where he lived, with good success; and his medicine was harmless . . .” Nevertheless those against lobelia still make mention of the fact that Thomson was charged for murdering a man with lobelia, conveniently forgetting to mention that he was found “not guilty”. [37]

Since even today there are those who feel lobelia is too dangerous for common folk to use [38] and as I will be giving their feelings on the matter under the heading contra-indications, I thought it good to quote here some of the praises that have been lauded on lobelia by those who have used it and proved it’s worth. Jethro Kloss claimed “*Lobelia is the most powerful relaxant known among the herbs that have no harmful effects. . . . acts differently upon different people, but it will not hurt anyone.*” [39] “*There are so many cases of miraculous healings with the use of lobelia that it would take pages to cite the details. There is truly no end to the ways in which lobelia may be used to heal and regenerate the body.*” – “School of Natural Healing” [40]

The writers of “The Model Botanic Guide to Health” had this to say concerning lobelia’s being called a poison “*We consider it one of the best remedies in the whole materia medica: and are confident – the old women’s stories in the books, (meaning the medical school books) to the contrary notwithstanding – that lobelia is a valuable, a safe, and sufficiently gentle article of medicine; and we think the time will come when it will be much better appreciated. Little, however of its value, can be specified within the compass of a single sheet of paper. We not only give it to our patients, but take it ourselves whenever we have the occasion for an emetic. We can assure the public that it can be used without apprehension or danger; we have given it to infants a few months old.*” [41]

Those who have listed lobelia as a poison, have done so, not out of practical experience but have simply copied the words of others without searching it out. [42] “The Model Botanic Guide to Health” made the strong statement “*Medical men are often deluded by giving heed to mere opinions instead of noticing facts; but men who have divested themselves of that which has been taught them in medical schools have discovered truth from error.*” [43]

Concerning the misclassification of lobelia as a “poison” Dr. Nowell said “*So successfully did he (Dr. Thomson) use it, that the regulars of his day classed it a poison, as some writers said only a poison could bring about the speedy results that Dr. Thomson obtained by its use.*” Dr. Christopher felt “*As for lobelia being a poison, this myth has been promulgated by allopaths to dissuade potential patients from using this God-given herb and being healed.*” [44]

Much has been written as to whether lobelia is a poison or not. Is not practical experience far better than theory? [45] Throughout the years of Dr. Christopher’s

practice, *“lobelia was administered many times, with numerous miraculous healings. Time after time, lobelia has helped the very young to the very old, with positive results when used correctly.”* –“School of Natural Healing”. Once Dr. Christopher quickly swallowed as much as four tablespoons of honey-sweetened tincture of lobelia at one time, mistaking it for apple cider vinegar. After retching and vomiting profusely from the emetic properties of the herb, he felt nothing but improvement, and suffered no damage whatsoever, only a good cleaning out! Dr. Christopher stated *“That it has no poisonous properties we very definitely affirm. Dr. H. Nowell used it for nearly thirty years, in all manner of cases, and at all ages. . . . if half that is said against it by the medical profession were true, thousands should have been dead from its use. It is a very powerful herb, however, and, like other powerful herbs, must be used wisely.”* –“School of Natural Healing”[46]

Authors of “The Model Botanic Guide to Health” state *“We can bear testimony that it is harmless when given in a proper manner; we never saw any evil effect, and our experience should be worth something when we say that we have sold in our practice upwards of one hundred pounds weight per year for seventy years past, which according to the notions of some medical men, would have been sufficient to poison one-half the population of England.”*[47]

Throughout all the nineteenth-century prosecutions, there has never been a single instance of harm resulting from the use of lobelia. Even back in Thomson’s day there were studies showing its safety. Prof. W. (William) Tully of Yale College, wrote to Dr. H. Lee of Middletown, Conn., March 22nd, 1838: *Lobelia inflata is entirely destitute of any narcotic powers. I have been in the habit of employing this article for twenty-seven years, in large quantities and for a long period, without the least trace of any narcotic effect. I have used the very best official tincture in the quantity of three fluid ounces in twenty-four hours, and for four and seven days in succession, and I have likewise given three large tablespoonfuls of it within half an hour, without the least indication of any narcotic operation. I have known four and five tobacco pipes full of it smoked in immediate succession and without any narcosis, and I have also known it to be given by enema with the same result. . . .Dr. Bigelow, of Boston, was the first person who ascribed narcotic powers to this agent, and he did this in 1817, but not from his own observation. “I am confident (the old women’s stories in the book are to the contrary notwithstanding) that lobelia is a valuable, a safe, and a sufficiently gentle article of medicine, and I think the time will come when it will be much better appreciated”.* –prof. W. Tully of Yale College[48]

Lobelia vindicates itself through the very properties that some say prove it is poisonous. It is true that an overdose would kill you, but even if you were able to

swallow enough to do so, you would vomit it right back up. The emetic properties are a built in overdose prevention. Is it not further proof of the wisdom of our Creator, who designed lobelia for our good? Lobelia has even been used where poison has been given in mistake for the purpose of discharging the contents of the stomach. I find it interesting that the very herb some say is a poison, in knowledgeable hands is an antidote to poison.[49]

The final absurdity of this whole issue is the alternative – the truly poisonous, inorganic antidotes that are offered by orthodoxy in most official publications as “remedies” against purported lobelia “poisoning.” I found an interesting description of the “poisonous” plant lobelia and treatment for “poisoning” by it, in “Wood’s Household Practice of Medicine” under the heading Poisons: Their effects and antidotes. I have copied it here in its entirety as it so well portrays the opinion of Medical Doctors of the 19th century on lobelia. *“Lobelia inflata. Indian Tobacco. – A well-known low herb, growing through Canada and the United States. It has a nauseous and fiery taste when chewed. It contains a very potent volatile alkaloid – lobelina, and acts as a violent emetic, even in comparatively small doses. Taken in excess, it has produced fatal results. Symptoms. – Nausea and violent vomiting, accompanied with intense prostration, cold, clammy surface, and great muscular weakness. In some fatal cases vomiting has not occurred, and in others convulsions have taken place as death has approached. Treatment. – Wash out the stomach with warm drinks, such as strong tea, solutions of tannic acid, decoction of oak-bark. Use alcoholic stimulants and ammonia internally, and apply dry heat to the surface of the body.”*[50]

It is strange that they would go to all that effort giving antidotes to a nonpoison, even antidotes that are known poisons. But the above example of treatment is mild compared to the one Dr. Christopher cited *“Place in recumbent position, emptying stomach if vomiting has not been free, give tannin, cardiac and respiratory stimulants, strychnine, thebaine, alcohol, atropine or belladonna, digitalis, morphine, artificial heat, ergot or castor oil.”*[51]

So, you may wonder, where does lobelia stand today? The answer is on shaky ground. The FDA has listed it with other “dangerous” herbs in a report entitled “Illnesses and Injuries Associated with the Use of Selected Dietary Supplements”. The report published in 1993 states *“There have been several reported cases of adverse reactions associated with consumption of dietary supplements containing lobelia.”* It goes on to say *“because of its similarity to nicotine, lobelia may be dangerous to susceptible populations, including children, pregnant women, and individuals with cardiac disease.”* It ends its discussion on lobelia bemoaning the fact that *“lobelia is nevertheless found in dietary supplement products that are marketed for use by children and infants, pregnant women,*

and smokers.” I say, wonderful, that even though the FDA and others are putting out strong warnings against lobelia’s use, people are still using it.[52]

I found no evidence of lobelia being a poison in “The Merck Manual 17th edition” though I searched the specific poisons table diligently. Even so “The Consumer’s Guide to Herbal Medicine, written by an M.D. suggests that prescription medications are both safer and more effective than lobelia.[53] Many people have found the opposite to be true and continue to use lobelia for the same uses as it has been for centuries with positive results.[54]

Sadly, lobelia, when not attacked, is mostly overlooked today. In a great big medical encyclopedia which boasted to contain medical information on nearly 1,000 disorders/conditions and 352 treatments and therapies lobelia was mentioned only twice. This was a little disappointing because it was purported to include appropriate alternative treatments. The two conditions that it gave lobelia as being beneficial for were rheumatoid arthritis and congenital lobar emphysema. It totally missed recommending lobelia as an effective treatment for asthma. If I would have written the book, lobelia would likely have been mentioned over a hundred times. Though I gave this in a negative sense there is a small nugget of encouragement. In that it was included despite what the FDA has to say about it.[55]

[1] King, King’s American Dispensatory, Action, Medicinal Uses and Dosage, www.henriettesherbal.com

[2] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 146, 150, 151; King, King’s American Dispensatory, Action, Medical Uses, and Dosage, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html

[3] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142, 144; Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist p. 198; Kadans, Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs, p. 148.

[4] King, King’s American Dispensatory, Action, Medical Uses, and Dosage, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html

[5] Scully, A Treasury of American Indian Herbs, part 2, p.237.

[6] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch 10, p. 398; Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, p. 283

[7] Christopher and Gileadi, Every Woman’s Herbal, First Aid, p. 161, and The New Baby, p. 98.

[8] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 142, 144, 146, 152; King, King’s American Dispensatory found at www.henriettesherbal.com; Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, p. 278, 279; Ellis, Dr. Mom’s Healthy Living, section 1, p. 72-73.

[9] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397.

[10] King, King’s American Dispensatory, 1898, Action, Medical Uses and Dosage, www.henriettesherbal.com

[11] Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist, p. 198.

[12] Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, 1919, p. 285

[13] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 398; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 143; Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, p. 279, 285-286.

[14] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 401.

[15] Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, 1919, Lobelia, Therapeutics and Pharmacognosy, p. 276

[16] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 401

[17] King, King’s American Dispensatory, 1898, www.henriettesherbal.com.

[18] Christopher and Gileadi, Every Woman’s Herbal, pp. 76, 78.

[19] Christopher and Gileadi, Every Woman’s Herbal, p. 82.

[20] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 400.

- [21] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, pp. 395, 401
- [22] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 151
- [23] Kadans, Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs, 1993, p. 148;
- [24] Christopher and Gileadi, Every Woman's Herbal, The New Baby, p. 103.
- [25] Kadans, Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs, 1993, p.147; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 142-143.
- [26] Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist, p. 198; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 395; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142.
- [27] Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, p. 283
- [28] Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants and Herbs, p. 207, Colby, A Guide to Health, 1846, Relaxants;
- [29] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142.
- [30] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 149.
- [31] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 73, 76, 151, 142; Grieves, A Modern Herbal, p. 495; Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist, p. 198
- [32] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, p. 401.
- [33] Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, p. 108.
- [34] Keim, Comfort for the Burned and Wounded, p. 41
- [35] Hylton, The Rodale Herb Book, 1975, appendix A, p. 496; Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants, 2000, p. 208; Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist, 1991, p. 198; Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, p. 108;
- [36] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 394; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 152; Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, p. 276-277;
- [37] Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library, No. 11, series 7, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, p. 27, 34, 36-37, 42, 46, 48-58, 89.
- [38] <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>
- [39] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142.
- [40] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 401
- [41] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp.150-151.
- [42] Colby, A Guide to Health, 1846, Relaxants, Lobelia.
- [43] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 150.
- [44] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 395
- [45] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 150-152;
- [46] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, pp. 395-396
- [47] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 151.
- [48] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 396
- [49] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 150,
- [50] Castle, Wood's Household Practice of Medicine, Volume 1, 1880, p. 795.
- [51] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 396.
- [52] U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Illnesses and Injuries Associated with the Use of Selected Dietary Supplements, D. Lobelia, p. 3, <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/-dms/ds-ill.html>.
- [53] Karch, The Consumer's Guide to Herbal Medicine, ch. 6. Herbal profiles, p. 128.
- [54] Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 12-13; Cech, Making Plant Medicine, part 2, 167.
- [55] Olendorf, Jeryan, and Boyden, The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, v. 5, vii; v. 2, p. 795; v. 4, p. 2502.

LOCATION OF LOBELIA

Lobelia's generic name was given it in honor of Matthiast de Lobel, a distinguished botanist of the sixteenth century. The species name inflata is in reference to the peculiar inflated seed pods.[1] Where exactly does lobelia fit into in the world of plants? Lobelia's classification is as follows below.

Kingdom	Plantae – Plants
Subkingdom	Tracheobionta – Vascular plants
Superdivision	Spermatophyta – Seed plants
Division	Magnoliophyta –Flowering Plants
Class	Magnoliopsida – Dicotyledons
Subclass	Asteridae –
Order	Campanulales –
Family	Campanulaceae – Bellflower family
Genus	Lobelia L. –lobelia
Species	Lobelia inflata L. – Indian Tobacco[2]

We've talked a lot about lobelia's history but you probably don't have a clue what the subject of our discussion looks like. Lobelia makes no bold statements, it is a modest yellowish green annual or biennial hairy plant up to 1 meter high with branched stems. The pale green ovate-oblong leaves alternate on the stem, are sessile or subsessile and toothed with a hairy underside. The tiny irregular two lipped white to pale blue flowers tinted pale yellow within are found blooming from June to October. The numerous inconspicuous flowers are positioned on long, loose racemes terminating the branches. The flowers mature into inflated, two celled oval capsules containing a number of small ovate-oblong, light brown seeds. The tiny seeds only 1/33 of an inch in length and 1/85 of an inch wide viewed under the microscope reveal an interesting design somewhat resembling basket-work. If you want to make sure whether you have found lobelia or not, the smell and taste test can be used. The odor is described as slight and irritating and the taste as strongly acrid, resembling tobacco.[3]

You have a good chance of finding it if you look in moist or wet locations in cool temperate regions and dry to moist areas in warm temperate regions of North America with an average rainfall of 7-13 inches. Lobelia grows in dry open places, fields, waste places and open woods over much of the United States and up into Canada. Its range is from Nova Scotia to Georgia; Louisiana, Arkansas, Eastern Kansas to Saskatchewan but most common in the north eastern states especially Massachusetts, New York and Michigan.[4]

-
- [1] King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html;
- [2] USDA, NRCS, NPDA, Plant Guide, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=LOIN>
- [3] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 394; USDA, NRCS, NPDA, Plant Guide, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=LOIN>; Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants, p. 207.
- [4] Duke, Economic Plants and Their Ecological Distribution; Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants and Herbs, p. 207; Kadans, Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs, p.146.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS OF LOBELIA

Now for the technical part that my puny little brain can barely grasp. Hope I don't get you too confused. The constituents of a plant really are quite interesting, once you get into it. Though the whole plant is responsible for the action, not any single constituent, the constituents are the make up of the plant influencing its action. When we know which constituents are present and what their action is it helps us to understand the action of the whole plant in a clearer way.[1]

Lobelia contains fourteen piperidine-type alkaloids with confusing tongue twister names. Lobeline, lobelanine, and lobelanidine are found in the greatest proportions. Lobelamine, norlobelanine, lelobanidine, norlelobanidine, norlobelanidine, lobinine, norlobeline (=isolobelanine), lelobanidine, lovinine, isolobinine, lobinanidine are present in lesser amounts.[2] How would you like to rattle those names off one after the other? I'm afraid my tongue would get so tangled I wouldn't even be able to say lobelia anymore.

In addition to the alkaloids lobelia also contains a bitter glycoside (lobelacrin), chelidonic acid, lipids (fats), gum, resin, a pungent volatile oil (labelianin), chlorophyll, lignin, salts of lime and potassium, with ferric oxide.[3] Another constituent of lobelia, beta-amyrin palmitate, has been studied for its antidepressant effects. In one study the *in vivo* actions of beta-amyrin palmitate on central nervous system activity were compared with those of two antidepressant drugs, mianserin and imipramine with positive results.[4]

The pharmacological effects of lobelia are attributed primarily to the piperidine-type alkaloids, particularly lobeline.[5] Lobelia's alkaloids stimulate the vagus nerve which controls the stomach.[6] Proctor was the first in 1838 to isolate the liquid alkaloid lobeline which scientists consider to be the active principle of lobelia.[7] Lobeline is found in higher concentrations in the seeds than the rest of the plant. [8] The piperidine alkaloids are closely related to nicotine though less potent and have similar chemical effects on the peripheral and central nervous (CNS) systems.[9]

Other research shows that the principle pharmacological activity of lobeline is not nicotine agonism. Rather, lobeline may affect CNS activity by altering the dopamine chemistry of the brain. Lobeline has been shown to be more potent than d-amphetamine in blocking dopamine uptake into synaptic vesicles. Lobeline induces reflex stimulation of the respiratory center by acting on the chemoreceptors of the glomus caroticus, producing stronger and deeper breathing. This helps to explain why lobelia is useful for respiratory complaints.[10]

Isolobelanine also called norlobelanine has a balancing effect to lobeline, relaxing the respiratory and neuro-muscular system. Lobeline is a powerful respiratory stimulant, while isolobelanine is an emetic and respiratory relaxant. Can you see how the apparently paradoxical effects of stimulating and relaxing work so well together? Don't worry we'll get more into it when we discuss the medicinal qualities of lobelia.[11]

[1] Hobbs, Medicinal Plant Constituents, introduction, p. 1-3.

[2] <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobeliaph.html>; Hoffman, Lobelia inflata, <http://www.healthy.net/asp/templates/article.asp?PageType=article&ID=1409>; PDR for Herbal Medicines, 1999, p. 943; Stedman, Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 26th edition, 1995, p. 992. Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants and Herbs, p. 207.

[3] Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495; Mabey, The New Age Herbalist, p. 36.

[4] <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>

[5] <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>

[6] Christopher, Guide to Colon Health

[7] Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495

[8] Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495

[9] <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>; Karch, The Consumer's Guide to Herbal Medicine, ch. 6, Herbal Profiles, p. 127;

[10] <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>; Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, p. 108.

[11] http://altnature.com/gallery/Blue_Lobelia.htm; Hoffman, Lobelia, <http://www.healthy.net/asp/templates/article.asp?PageType=article&ID=1409>.

MEDICINAL QUALITIES OF LOBELIA

I will attempt to put on paper that which is really not possible. To comprehend lobelia's medicinal qualities you must see more than words of praise on paper, you need to see the action of the plant in real life scenarios to grasp its multifarious medicinal qualities.

The authors of "The Model Botanic Guide to Health" expressed their feelings on the medicinal value of lobelia well when they wrote "*The medical qualities of this invaluable herb are so multifarious that a large treatise might well be written on its curative powers. Suffice it, however, to say that it is a general corrector of the whole system, innocent in its nature, and moving with the general spirits. In healthy systems it will be silent and harmless. It is fully as well calculated to remove the cause of disease as food is to remove hunger; and it clears away all obstructions in the circulation regardless of the nature of the disease.*" [1]

Lobelia is most noted for its antispasmodic, emetic, relaxant, stimulant and expectorant actions. Other therapeutic actions attributed to lobelia are: nervine sedative, anti-venomous, counter-irritant, emmenagogue, diaphoretic, diuretic, cathartic, astringent, sialogogue and nauseant.[2] King stated emphatically "It is in no sense a narcotic".[3]

No single constituent of lobelia is responsible for lobelia's healing effects. The whole leaf, as opposed to isolated constituents, is known to be strongly antispasmodic

Lobelia's antispasmodic/relaxing, stimulating (respiratory), emetic/expectorant action makes it valuable for asthma and bronchitis etc. It relaxes the muscles of the smaller bronchial tubes, thus opening the airways, stimulating breathing, and promoting the coughing up of phlegm, helping prevent spasmodic, nonproductive coughing.[4]

Lobelia's actions differ according to the dose used. Small doses tend to have a relaxing effect and large doses a stimulating effect. In moderate doses lobelia stimulates the central nervous system to dilate the bronchioles, increasing respiration. The likelihood that the initial bronchial dilation will be followed by respiratory depression is increased with large doses.[5] The circulation is likewise enfeebled by large doses but strengthened by small doses.[6] Lobelia also affects the vagus nerve which controls the stomach. A small amount of lobelia has the effect of calming the stomach, decreasing nausea, and relieving stomach cramps. Large amounts of lobelia can act as a purgative instead of an emetic, but the end result is the same; emptying the stomach of its contents.[7]

The earliest use of lobelia, that of an emetic, is tightly interwoven with its other therapeutic actions.[8] A large enough dose of lobelia to cause vomiting has a stimulating then general depressing action on the central and autonomic nervous system and on neuromuscular action.[9] Profuse perspiration, nausea, oppressive prostration, relaxation of the muscular system and a languid pulse/rapid heart rate accompany the emetic stage.[10] This is what has scared many people and frightened them into declaring that lobelia is a dangerous herb.[11] The depression, however, is of short duration, and is immediately followed by a sense of extreme satisfaction and wellbeing.[12] Old time doctors used lobelia's effect on the heart to advantage. They felt that "*It makes the pulse fuller and slower in cases of inflammation and fever . . . [and] reduces palpitation of the heart*"[13]

When relaxation of the system is required lobelia is invaluable as it is an extremely efficient relaxant, influencing mucous, serous, nervous, and muscular structures.[14] "A Guide to Health" an exposition of the Thomsonian system of practice states "*lobelia is the most powerful, certain, and harmless relaxant that has ever been discovered*". Since Thomsonians believed relaxation was an important indication in the cure of most disease, lobelia was an indispensable article in their materia medica.[15] John King stated in his Dispensatory that "under its action the mental powers are unusually acute, and the muscles are powerfully relaxed."—King's American Dispensatory.[16] For best results the relaxation caused by lobelia should be counteracted by stimulating herbs such as catnip, peppermint, or cayenne.[17] It really works both ways since lobelia increases other herbs effectiveness in cases where relaxation is needed.[18]

What I consider to be the most important property of lobelia can certainly not be attached to any particular constituent of the plant. What makes lobelia great is its ability to go right to where it is needed and carry out the exact action that it should. In conditions that could go either way, this can be a virtual life saver. There are stories of lobelia saving babies when their mothers are miscarrying and other times it did not stop the miscarriage but rather assisted the spontaneous abortion of the dead fetus.[19] In two similar cases of large abscesses, the action of the herb was different, draining internally in a strong and husky boy and externally in the weak and puny boy. It is almost as if lobelia is capable of thinking and because of this has been called the thinking herb. Lobelia even tells you when you have had too much – you will vomit it right back up.[20]

[1] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 151-152

[2] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 394.

[3] King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html

[4] Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, p. 108; Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 12-13.

- [5] Elpel, Botany in a Day, p. 156; <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>
- [6] King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html
- [7] Christopher, Dr. Christopher's Guide to Colon Health, p. 57. King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html
- [8] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Relaxants, Lobelia inflata.
- [9] Hoffman, Lobelia, Health World Online.
- [10] King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html.
- [11] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Relaxants, Lobelia inflata.
- [12] King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html
- [13] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142,
- [14] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 144, Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 394
- [15] Colby, A Guide to Health, Relaxants, Lobelia inflata.
- [16] King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html
- [17] Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495; Christopher, Dr. Christopher's Guide to Colon Health, p. 57.
- [18] Hoffman, Lobelia, Health World Online, <http://www.healthy.net/asp/templates/article.asp?PageType=article&ID=1409>
- [19] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, pp. 395, 401.
- [20] Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 12

CONTRA-INDICATIONS OF LOBELIA

Oh, No, now I have to give you all the negative news on lobelia. And believe me there sure is a lot of it out there. I hope you don't forget all the wonderful qualities of lobelia that we already discussed. Remember that what some consider proof that the plant is poisonous simply shows those who understand lobelia, how powerful it is in assisting the human body to throw off disease.

The use of lobelia is contraindicated in the following situations; Decompensation (failure of compensation – the counterbalancing of defect of structure or function); Hydrothorax (effused fluid in pleural cavity (pleura – the serous membrane investing lungs and lining the thorax); Hypertension (abnormally high tension; especially high blood-pressure) due to the alpha adrenergic hypertensive effect of lobeline. People with nicotine sensitivity and pregnant or nursing women are also warned against using lobelia due to the similarity of lobeline to nicotine.[1]

It should not be used in “nervous prostration”, shock, paralysis, or poisoning with a depressing substance due to lobeline's (an alkaloid in lobelia) depressant effect on preganglionic nicotine receptors.[2] Large doses of lobelia can temporarily affect the heart muscle, so those with a history of irregular heartbeat should avoid “lobelia puke” therapy.[3] Specific contraindications relating to lobeline's effect on cardiac neural conductivity are; Asthma secondary to cardiac disease, ‘hypertension’ sinus arrhythmia or bundle branch block; hydropericardium (dropsy of pericardium); dyspnea from enlarged or fatty heart; and valvular incompetence of the heart.[4] Furthermore it should not be employed as an emetic especially in the very young or elderly due to the depressant effect of lobeline.[5]

Lobelia is considered toxic because of its strong emetic, expectorant, and sedative effects and too dangerous for use by laymen. Common folks, those who are not doctors, are advised to avoid the plant and to only take professionally prepared preparations under the guidance of a qualified practitioner i.e. medical herbalist or doctor.[6] The editors of Jethro Kloss's great herbal “Back to Eden” had the audacity to insert this caution “*Lobelia may have some toxic effects and should not be taken internally without proper consultation. It is safe if used externally.*”[7]

If those who don't know what they are doing, use lobelia, watch out. The naysayers' list of side effects and overdose symptoms is pretty scary. Lobeline, like nicotine, acts as a stimulant in small dosages, but as a nerve depressant and powerful acro-narcotic poison in excessive doses, hence the danger of experimentation.[8] Overdose symptoms include: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea,

coughing, dizziness, disturbed hearing and vision, mental confusion, weakness, shivering, profuse sweating, tachycardia, convulsions, hypothermia, hypotension, pinpoint pupils, paralysis, respiratory depression, low blood pressure, salivation, stupor, tachypnea (very rapid respiration), tremors, coma and in extreme cases death due to respiratory paralysis.[9] After that long list of scary side effects I found some good news as well. Excessive ingestion is rare because vomiting normally occurs first, forestalling and/or lessening the toxic results.[10]

Lobelia is definitely contra-indicated in cases where there is no hope of recovery. Even though lobelia can work “miracles” it has its limits and cannot “raise the dead”. Benjamin Colby said “. . . *lobelia cannot go beyond these bounds, and save life where nature, in her omnipotence has declared that life should no longer be* . . .” If lobelia is given in a hopeless case, lobelia goes down on record as having killed them, even if they have been given up by the best doctors in town.[11]

[1] <http://www.naturalopinion.com/report/HtmlPages/Lobelia.htm>, www.farmacopia.net/nutrient_herbs.html;

<http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>

[2] www.farmacopia.net/nutrient_herbs.html; <http://www.naturalopinion.com/report/HtmlPages/Lobelia.htm>.

[3] Cech, Making Plant Medicine, part 2, p. 166; Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist, p. 198.

[4] <http://www.naturalopinion.com/report/HtmlPages/Lobelia.htm>, www.farmacopia.net/nutrient_herbs.html

[5] www.farmacopia.net/nutrient_herbs.html

[6] Meyers, The Herbalist, p. 74; Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants; p. 108; Lust, The Herb Book, p. 259; Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants, p. 208.

[7] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142.

[8] Hylton, The Rodale Herb Book, Appendix A, p. 496; Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.

[9] <http://www.naturalopinion.com/report/HtmlPages/Lobelia.htm>;

<http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>

Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495; Elpel, Botany in a Day, part 2, p. 156.

[10] <http://www.naturalopinion.com/report/HtmlPages/Lobelia.htm>, Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, Key Medicinal Plants, p. 108

[11] Colby, A Guide to Health, 1846, Relaxants, Lobelia inflata; King, King's American Dispensatory, www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html; Lloyd, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library, No. 11, series 7, 1909, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, p. 40.

KNOWN HERBAL FORMULAS OF LOBELIA

Lobelia has been used for a broad range of diseases combined with many different herbs. Two reasons for this are:

1. To gain full advantage of lobelia's quickly dissipating stimulating effect and to balance its relaxing effect lobelia is combined with other stimulating herbs such as peppermint or cayenne;
2. Lobelia is a thinking herb, or catalyst helping other herbs work better. It lends its valuable properties very nicely to many different herbal formulas.[1]

Samuel Thomson was the first to bring lobelia into widespread use as a medicinal agent. And since he was first I decided to list the Thomsonian formulas first. Here are examples of Thomson's remedies with directions for preparation, uses and dosage that were included with the formulas in the original texts.

Thomson Lobelia Pills No. 1 for Headache, Liver Complaint

Lobelia seed	4 OZ.
Cayenne.....	4 OZ.
Valerian.....	4 OZ.
Slippery elm	4 OZ.
Dandelion extract4 OZ.

Mix and roll in slippery elm. Designed to relax the system gradually, so as not to produce vomiting. Useful in all cases of constriction or fever, head-ache, liver complaint, &c.

Dose. – from one to four at night, or as often as the nature of the case may require.[2]

Thomson Lobelia Pills No. 2.

Butternut extract	2 OZ.
Rhubarb (Rheum).....	2 OZ.
Cayenne.....	2 OZ.
Cinnamon.....	2 OZ.
Lobelia seed	1 OZ.
Aloes.....	1/2 OZ.
Goldenseal (Hydrastis).....	2 OZ.
Slippery Elm	2 OZ.

Moisten with gum arabic water. Mix and make into pills. These pills are designed for universal application in all cases not accompanied with looseness of the bowels. Their efficacy in biliary obstructions and costiveness has been unprecedented.[3]

Thomson Injection Powder

Bayberry (Myrica).....	4 OZ.
Cayenne.....	1 OZ.
Lobelia herb	4 OZ
Slippery Elm	2 OZ.
Valerian.....	2 OZ.

All finely pulverized, and well mixed.

Dose. – Two teaspoonfuls in a gill of hot water, given about blood warm.[4]

Thomson Anti-Spasmodic Tincture – 3rd Lobelia Preparation

Lobelia seed, pulverized	1 lb.
Cayenne.....	4 OZ.
Valerian.....	4 OZ.
Holland Gin	1 gal.

Infuse for ten days in a closely-stopped vessel, shaking it every day; then strain off for use.

This preparation is valuable in violent attacks of any form of disease, such as lockjaw, fits, hydrophobia, suspended animation, to expel poison of any kind from the system; as an external application, it is useful in sprains, bruises, rheumatic pains, &c.

Dose. – A teaspoonful, repeated as often as the nature of the case requires, in some warming tea.[5]

Thomson Emetic Powder

Lobelia herb	4 OZ.
Lobelia seed	4 OZ.
Bayberry (Myrica).....	2 OZ.
Cayenne.....	4 OZ.
Valerian.....	2 OZ.

All finely pulverized, and well mixed.

Dose. – Put four teaspoonfuls in a cup of hot water, and give four teaspoonfuls of the tea, after the sediment settles, once in ten minutes until it operates freely as an emetic.[6]

Thomson Cough Powder

Cayenne.....	1/4 oz.
Lobelia, herb	1 oz.
Slippery Elm (<i>Ulmus fulva</i>)	2 oz.
Skunk Cabbage (<i>Symplocarpus</i>).....	1 oz.
Wake Robbin (<i>Trillium</i>)	1 oz.
Valerian	1 oz.
Prickly Ash (<i>Zanthoxylum</i>)	1 oz.

All finely pulverized and well mixed.

Dose. – Half a teaspoonful in hot water, sweetened, once in two or three hours.
Valuable in all cases of cough, consumption, croup, asthma, hoarseness, &c.[7]

Thomson Cough Drops

Lobelia herb	4 oz.
Hoarhound (<i>Marrubium Vulgare</i>)	2 oz.
Comfrey	2 oz.
Elecampane (<i>Inula</i>)	2 oz.
Boneset (<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>).....	4 oz.

Boil in three quarts of water to three pints, strain and add two pounds of white sugar and one pint of Holland gin.

Dose. – Two or three teaspoonfuls once an hour; for asthma, croup, cough, whooping cough, consumption, &c.[8]

Thomson Elm Poultice

Slippery Elm (<i>Ulmus fulva</i>)	2 teaspoonfuls.
Lobelia herb	1 teaspoonful.
Ginger (<i>Zingiber</i>).....	1 teaspoonful.

Mix in warm water. Useful in cases of pain and inflammation; if the skin is off, the ginger may be omitted.[10]

Thomson Sudorific Powder to induce sweating

Lobelia, herb	4 oz.
Pleurisy Root (<i>Asclepia tuberosa</i>)	4 oz.
Skunk Cabbage (<i>Symplocarpus</i>).....	4 oz.
Crawley Root (<i>Coralorhiza</i>)	4 oz.

Dose. – A quarter of a teaspoonful once an hour, until a gentle perspiration is produced. In typhus or scarlet fever it may be increased as the case may require. Valuable for producing perspiration and equalizing the circulation; highly useful for a cough, and admirably adapted to break up a cold.[11]

Thomson Anti-Itch Ointment

Tincture of Myrrh (Commiphora)..... 1 qt.
Tincture of Lobelia 1 qt.
Spirits Turpentine..... 1/2 pt.

Mix and apply to the entire surface night and morning.[12]

Thomson Catarrh Snuff Formula

Blood Root (Sanguinaria)..... 2 oz.
Skunk Cabbage (Symplocarpus) 1 oz.
Lobelia..... 1 oz.
Snake Root (Asarum) 1/2 oz.
Slippery Elm 1 oz.

All finely pulverized, sifted and well mixed. Useful in catarrh and stoppage in the nose.[13]

Lobelia Alcohol Tincture

Lobelia herb 4 oz.
Grain Alcohol 1 pt.
Water..... 1 pt.

Infuse twelve days, and strain. This is a convenient form to administer in many cases, especially for children, and for external application in eruptive forms of disease. An acid tincture is prepared by putting 4 oz. lobelia herb into a quart of vinegar.[9]

Lobelia Acid Tincture

Lobelia Inflata herb 2 ounces
Lobelia Inflata Seed, crushed 2 ounces
Apple Cider Vinegar 1 pint

Vinegar was and still is the menstruum of choice over alcohol when making a simple tincture of lobelia. The vinegar tincture was most often referred to as acid tincture of lobelia. The basic recipe for the acid tincture of lobelia is as follows: Lobelia herb 2 oz., Crushed lobelia seed 2 oz., Apple cider vinegar 1 pint. Soak for two weeks in a well-stoppered bottle, shaking every day. Then strain and it is ready

for use. This is also good used as an external application, rubbing between the shoulders and on the chest in asthma. Dr. H. Nowell used it regularly in this way and had some surprising results in cases where the breathing had been most difficult. Dr. Nowell's formula was only slightly different in that he used malt vinegar, the best he could find. Still others made their acid tincture of lobelia with homemade raspberry vinegar. The acid tincture can be added to horehound, hyssop, sage or other teas, or may be added to the composition tea in doses of a teaspoonful to a cupful of the herb tea for cough, asthma, colds, etc. It is also extremely useful as an emetic when one feels that the stomach should be thoroughly cleansed.[14]

Other formulas added 1 teaspoonful of cayenne to the same amount of vinegar and less of the herb. I found one such lobelia - cayenne combo labeled SOS tincture with the statement that *"This is a remedy to be used in case of emergency during an angina or asthma attack, anxiety attack or hysteria: use very small dose of 3 to 5 drops diluted in a little water. It will take between 5 and 10 minutes to take effect."*[15]

If you don't like the taste of vinegar I also found a lobelia syrup. The recipe for syrup of lobelia is *"2 ½ ounces Lobelia herb (Lobelia inflata), 2 pints Distilled or d-cell water. Preparation: Simmer this mixture down to 1 pint. Strain and dissolve 2 pounds of raw sugar or 1 pound of honey into it. Dosage: 1 teaspoonful (for coughs); ½ to 1 cupful as an emetic."* – "School of Natural Healing"[16]

Next to the simple acid tincture of lobelia, no other formula has been so widely used as the antispasmodic tincture, or third preparation of lobelia, as some herbal practitioners called it. *"A most effective compound . . . useful in many violent cases such as epilepsy, convulsions, lockjaw, delirium tremens, fainting, hysteria, cramps, suspended animation, etc."* – "Back to Eden"

Anti-Spasmodic Tincture

Lobelia seed, crushed	1 ounce
Skullcap.....	1 ounce
Skunk Cabbage root.....	1 ounce
Gum Myrrh	1 ounce
Black Cohosh	1 ounce
Cayene.....	½ ounce

Directions: *"Macerate in at least 1 pint of grain alcohol (use enough alcohol to cover all the herbs) in a tightly capped vessel, and shake well at least once a day. After 10-14 days, strain, squeeze or press out the liquid."*

Dosage: 1 to several drops.[17]

The antispasmodic formula has been used with remarkable results. A drop or two thrust into the mouth of a baby in convulsions stopped the problem immediately according to Dr. Christopher and other herbal doctors. In another account a man rolling in agony and moaning with pain was given one teaspoonful of antispasmodic tincture in half a cup of sweetened warm water and all traces of cramps and spasms were gone within fifteen seconds. Used for lockjaw with good success. Here is Dr. H. Nowell's account after pouring a teaspoonful of the antispasmodic tincture full strength between a man's clenched teeth *"before a second teaspoonful could be poured from the bottle the locked jaws had relaxed and the patient asked, 'My God! What have you done?'"* The old time herbal doctors said of antispasmodic tincture *"It traverses the system with most remarkable rapidity, and we verily believe that in cases of suspended animation, locked jaws, spasms, and cramps it stands unequalled in the whole realm of therapeutic agents."*[18]

Mr. Hool, of Lancashire's, recipe was slightly different in that he used equal parts of the herbs, ½ ounce of each to one and a half pints of alcohol. He also used valerian instead of black cohosh and used lobelia herb in addition to the seed. Jethro Kloss quoted Hool's writings extensively in his herbal "Back to Eden". Since what he said illustrates the tremendous good of this formula and its method of use so well I am quoting him also. Hool wrote *"The above tincture will be found superior to any other single agent, as its purely innocuous character renders it a safe and reliable remedy for patients of all ages. In . . . mucus and spasmodic croup the tincture must be administered promptly and in full teaspoonful doses in warm water and repeated at intervals of every ten or fifteen minutes until free vomiting ensues, as it is necessary in all such cases to induce complete relaxation of the system, by means of full emetic doses repeated at suitable intervals."* Further instructions of Mr. Hool were *"Where the case is very severe or the tincture is difficult to administer, as in the case of infants, it should be rubbed well into the neck, chest, and between the shoulders at the same time. Two or three drops of the tincture in a raw state should be placed in the mouth and washed down with teaspoonful doses of warm water and the patient kept warm in bed. In all such cases relief will be experienced in a few minutes, and by repeating the same treatment every one or two hours a cure will soon be effected and the patient brought to a state of convalescence."*

In cases of typhoid, typhus, spotted fever, scarlet fever, etc. Dr. Christopher's instructions were, *"Give 1 teaspoonful of Antispasmodic tincture in a little warm water every ½ hour. Wash the body daily, with 2 parts of hot water and 1 part apple cider vinegar. Change bedclothes and sheets daily, and give the patient warm water every 2 hours."* And for rheumatic fever the instructions were *"Rub*

the whole body from the neck to the toes with antispasmodic tincture. In bad cases (where the patient cannot sit up or move the arms or legs), give one teaspoonful of antispasmodic tincture in a little hot water every ½ hour until the patient perspires freely. Keep the patient in bed and allow him to cool down; then wash him with apple cider vinegar and hot water. Give the patient 1 teaspoonful of Antispasmodic tincture in hot water every 2 hours during the first day, and every 3 hours for a few days thereafter. When the case demands, rub some Antispasmodic tincture externally at the base of the skull and neck and along the sternum, and be sure to sponge the patient with apple cider vinegar and hot water.” This is the same instructions that Mr. Hool gave in Lesson 26, Dominion Herbal College, Ltd., 1962. Mr. Hool said *“If this course is followed, the practitioner will find both himself and his patient surprised at the speedy recovery the case will make.”*[19]

In regards to its action Mr. Hool asks and answers the question, *“But how is the result brought about? The properties of the lobelia, by immediate action on the muscular and mucous parts of the esophagus, glottis, larynx, windpipe and bronchial tubes, cause immediate relaxation; the parts previously contracted are made to expand and breathing is made easier. The properties of the cayenne pepper warm and stimulate the blood, allay the inflammation of the parts, cause better secretions and action of the mucous membranes. “The skullcap and valerian being nervines, allay the irritation of the nerves and prevent too much straining and excitement and by that means prevent rupture of the small vessels, while the action of the properties of the skunk cabbage and gum myrrh is to keep canker away and to brace up the system.”*[20]

Dr. Christopher one of the greatest herbalists of the 21st century, if not the greatest, knew and utilized lobelia's, one of the greatest herbs in the world, medicinal properties. He used lobelia in formulas for cleansing and healing the bowel, kidneys, glands, lungs and respiratory tract, nerves, prolapsed organs and adrenal glands. For the following conditions and needs; incontinence, allergies, hearing loss and earache, arthritis and rheumatism, infection, colitis and malfunction in bone, flesh and cartilage. He put it in calcium assimilation, anti-miscarriage, prenatal, anti-gas, antispasmodic, anti-plague, memory formulas and even a gum strengthening tooth powder. Dr. Christopher used both black cohosh and valerian in his antispasmodic tincture with equal parts of each herb.[21]

To list and discuss all the formulas containing lobelia that I am aware of would take considerable pages. To find more information on Dr. Christopher's wonderful formulas please refer to “School of Natural Healing” you will find all the formulas mentioned on the pages listed in the footnotes. It would certainly be worth your time to look them up as they are some of the very best formulas to be found and

useful for such a broad range of problems. Nevertheless I have selected a few to discuss in more detail. They are as follows.

Resp-Free, Dr. Christopher's formula for the lungs and respiratory tract has helped many people with asthma and other pulmonary conditions.

Dr. Christopher Resp-Free Lung and Bronchia Formula

Comfrey.....	1 part
Mullein.....	1 part
Chickweed.....	1 part
Marshmallow root	1 part
Lobelia Inflata.....	1 part

Dr. Christopher said *“This combination of herbs is an aid to relieve irritation in the respiratory tract, lungs and bronchials. . . . an aid in emphysema as well as other bronchial and lung congestions such as bronchitis, asthma, tuberculosis, etc. . . . extremely valuable in strengthening and healing the entire respiratory tract.”*[22] An unsolicited testimony *“This formula has been a boon to our asthmatic son, soothing the wheeze. Our son Daniel has asthma. For many years he took Theophylline and used bronchodilator inhalers. He was so bothered by asthma that he couldn't play hard without wheezing. Although the drugs gave temporary relief, he wasn't improving or healing. Relief finally came when we found herbs like comfrey, mullein and lobelia to nourish his bronchials and lungs. As he took these herbs daily to strengthen his respiratory system, his attacks were less and less frequent until they became rare.”*[23]

Dr. Christopher designed an herbal gruel with lobelia as the accentuating herb to assist in free, easy bowel movements.

Dr. Christopher Bowel Formula

Flax or Psyllium seed.....	3 parts
Licorice root.....	3 parts
Marshmallow root	3 parts
Comfrey root	3 parts
Lobelia Inflata.....	1 part
Honey	to taste

For additional assistance to the bowel, Dr. Christopher instructed *“prepare flax or psyllium seed, licorice root, marshmallow root, comfrey root, each in three parts, and add one part lobelia herb. Sweeten with honey if desired. Use as little or as much as you require for assisting in free, easy bowel movements.”* Why it works, *“The flaxseed and the psyllium seed give bulk; licorice root is a mild aperient*

(mildest of laxatives); marshmallow root is used to assist clearance where hard stools are prevalent; comfrey root is the healer and rebuilder of weak areas and gives lubrication; and lobelia is the accentuating herb.”[24]

Two of Dr. Christopher’s simple formulas containing just two herbs have done a world of good, even saving lives. The glandular formula, an aid to relieve mastitis, thyroid malfunction etc. is comprised of 3 parts mullein and one part lobelia Dr. Christopher said concerning the necessity of a glandular formula *“Through the accumulation of toxic waste in the body from improper diet, poor blood stream and sluggish circulation, the glands become congested and infected and swell up to cause much pain and misery.”*

Dr. Christopher Glandular formula

Mullein 3 parts
Lobelia Inflata..... 1 part

Dr. Christopher’s directions for using the glandular formula were *“make a tea of three parts mullein and one part lobelia herb and use as a fomentation over swollen or malfunctioning glands. Leave on all night, six nights a week until relief is obtained. Use a fresh fomentation as warm as possible each night. . . . In addition to the external fomentation, also drink a cup of this tea two or three times a day or take two of the capsules with a cup of steam distilled water.”* [25] The other simple formula that has done tremendous good is the anti-miscarriage formula consisting of false unicorn and lobelia. Refer back to lobelia’s history of use (page 22) for a story of a life saved with the use of this formula.[26]

Dr. Christopher listed the following three formulas in his lobelia chapter in “School of Natural Healing”.

Dr. Christopher Liver formula

Lobelia (*Lobelia inflata*) 1 part
Pleurisy root (*Asclepias tuberosa*)..... 1 part
Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) 1 part
Bitter root (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*) 1 part

Preparation: Mix the herbs well and steep 1 teaspoon of this combination in 1 cup of boiling water for 15 to 20 minutes; strain. Dosage: 2 tablespoonfuls every 2 hours, hot.[27]

Dr. Christopher Compound Lobelia capsules

Treats dyspepsia, rheumatism, inflammation, asthma, consumption, chills, jaundice and fevers.

Lobelia herb powder (<i>Lobelia inflata</i>).....	1 ounce
Lobelia seed powder (<i>Lobelia inflata</i>).....	1 ounce
Cayenne tincture (<i>Capsicum frutescens</i> ; <i>C. minimum</i>)...	1 ounce
Acacia vera or Gum Arabic powder (<i>Acacia Senegal</i>).....	2 ounces
Anise seed, powdered (<i>Pimpinella anisum</i>).....	1 ounce

Preparation: Mix and fill into #0 capsules. Dosage: 2 to 6 capsules per day, as the case requires.[28]

Puerperal convulsions

Lobelia extract (<i>Lobelia inflata</i>)	2 teaspoons
Ladies slipper extract (<i>Cypripedium calceolus</i>).....	4 teaspoons
Cayenne tincture (<i>Capsicum frutescens</i> ; <i>C. minimum</i>)...	1/2 teaspoon
Honey Water or simple syrup	6 ounces

Dosage: 1 teaspoonful every 1/2 hour.[29]

John W. Keim author of the book “Comfort for the Burned and Wounded” recommends a salve containing lobelia called B&W Salve. B&W stands for burns and wounds. Its ingredients are; honey, wheat germ oil, aloe vera, olive oil, lanolin, marshmallow root, white oak bark, wormwood, comfrey root, lobelia, vegetable glycerin and beeswax. Keim’s slight variation to Dr. Christopher’s Burn dressing included lobelia as he felt “*Lobelia takes the pain away*” Ingredients for burn dressing: 1/2 cup honey, 1/2 cup wheat germ oil, enough comfrey leaves to make a thick paste and a small amount of shredded lobelia.[30]

The vast majority of formulas containing lobelia are for pulmonary afflictions. Even though John Lust warned against the use of lobelia he gave four formulas using lobelia in his herbal “The Herb Book” three of them for coughs and asthma. It seems no matter how dangerous they say it is, they can’t do without it, it is such a wonderful herb.[31]

John Lust Asthma Formula

Lobelia.....	1 part
Garlic.....	1 part
Yerba Santa	1 part
Blackthorn.....	1 part
Gum plant	1 part
Euphorbia	1 part
Ground Ivy	1 part
Blue Vervain.....	1 part
Cayenne.....	1 part

Lobelia, garlic, Yerba santa, blackthorn, gum plant, euphorbia, ground ivy, blue vervain and cayenne were the ingredients of the formula John Lust gave for relief of asthma attack. No amounts were given so I assume equal parts are intended. Directions are “*simmer 8 tbsp. mixture in 1 qt. water for 20 minutes and strain. Take 4 tbsp. as a first dose, followed by 2 tbsp. every half hour. When the attack subsides, take 4 tbsp. every 4 hours.*” –John Lust.

John Lust Cough Relief Formula

Witch grass	12 parts
Aniseed.....	12 parts
Licorice.....	18 parts
Elecampane root.....	11 parts
Lungwort herb	10 parts
Thyme leaves	8 parts
Murillo bark	4 parts
Irish moss.....	4 parts
Lobelia herb	1 part

For relief of coughs he gave the following formula “*Boil 2 tsp. mixture in 3 cups water for 2 to 3 minutes; let stand for 10 minutes and strain. Take 1 cup, morning, noon and night.*” – John Lust.

John Lust Bronchial Cough Formula

Licorice.....	16 parts
Lungwort.....	10 parts
Spotted Cranesbill	8 parts
Aniseed.....	8 parts
Wild Cherry bark	8 parts
Oswego Tea	5 parts
Irish Moss	4 parts
Lobelia.....	3 parts

Dr. Otto Mausert’s formulas that he published in 1932 which included lobelia were all for pulmonary conditions except one. I have included his formulas for historical interest. Some of the non herbal ingredients I would be much opposed to using.[32]

Mausert Formula No. 3 - Asthma Powder

1. Dragon Turnip 2 drachms
Facilitates expectoration.
2. Ephedra Herb..... 2 drachms
Useful in Bronchial catarrh and Asthma.

3. Lobelia Herb..... 1 drachms
Stimulates the respiratory tract, relieves spasms.
4. Cyripedium..... 2 drachms
Quiets the nerves and relieves irritation
5. Quillaya Bark..... 3 drachms
Loosens phlegm from Bronchial tubes.
6. Cinnamon Bark 2 drachms
Acts as a local stimulant; pleasant aromatic
7. Licorice Root..... 4 drachms
Relieves irritation; facilitates expectoration.
8. Elecampane Root 4 drachms
Allays cough and catarrh inflammation of air passages.
9. Comfrey Root 4 drachms
Acts soothing to respiratory tract.

Mix well and divide into 20 doses, using fine powdered material. Directions: Divide one dose in two parts and take one part in the morning and one part at night, either mixed with a little honey, or stirred up in some water. This combination of herbs is a valuable remedy in affections of the throat and lungs, where slimy accumulations obstruct the air passages and cause shortness of breath, wheezing, dry painful coughing. It aids to loosen the phlegm, facilitates expectoration, relieves spasms and stimulates the respiratory center.

Mausert Formula No. 6 - Asthma Inhalation Powder

Note: This powder is used by inhalation only; the powder is burned and only the smoke is inhaled.

1. Stramonium leaves ounces 6
2. Henbane leaves ounces 1/2
3. Lobelia herb..... ounces 1/2
4. Belladonna leaves..... ounces 1/2
5. Cascarilla bark ounces 1/2
6. Nitrate of Potash ounces 1/2

Mix well and keep in a dry place, using powdered material. Directions: Place about half a teaspoonful of the mixture on a piece of tin or porcelain, light it with a match and inhale the fumes through the nostrils. This should be done immediately upon sensing the approach of an Asthmatic Paroxysm.

Mausert Formula No. 39 - For Bronchial Cough Powder

1. Sea Onion..... 40 grains
2. Ipecac Root..... 20 grains

3. Lobelia Herb..... 1 drachm
4. Chondrus 8 drachms
5. Quillaya Bark..... 2 drachms
6. Fennel Seed 8 drachms
7. Comfrey Root..... 4 drachms

Mix well and divide into 70 doses, using finely powdered material. Directions: Divide one dose into two parts and take morning and night, either before or after meals. It may be taken in water, or mixed with honey, jelly or jam. found especially valuable in coughs and colds affecting the bronchial tubes and lungs. Dry and painful coughing with soreness and hoarseness of the throat will be greatly benefitted by the soothing and healing effect of these herbs. They tend to relieve irritation and congestion in chest and air passages, facilitate expectoration and stimulate the respiratory organs.

Mausert Formula No. 81 - Tea for Coughs

1. Thyme leaves 4 drachms
2. Quillaya..... 2 drachms
3. Couch grass 6 drachms
4. Lobelia herb..... 1/2 drachms
5. Lungwort herb 5 drachms
6. Chondrus 2 drachms
7. Elecampane root..... 5 1/2 drachms
8. Licorice root 9 drachms
9. Anise seed..... 6 drachms
10. Comfrey root..... 6 drachms

Mix well and divide into 20 doses using herbs especially cut for tea. Directions: Add one dose to three cups of boiling water, cover, boil slowly for about 2 to 3 minutes, let it stand for ten minutes, then strain and take one third in the morning, noon and at night before or after meals.

Mausert Formula No. 315 - Whooping Cough Syrup

1. Thyme leaves fluid extract..... 1 drachm
2. Ipecacuanha root fluid extract..... 1/2 drachms
3. Lobelia herb fluid extract..... 1/2 drachms
4. Chestnut leaves fluid extract..... 1 drachm
5. Oil of Wild Thyme 8 drops
6. Anisated Spirits of Ammonia..... 2 drachms
7. Syrup of Honey enough to make..... 8 ounces

Directions: One teaspoonful every three hours.

He also had a formula for poison oak and ivy with lobelia in it.

Mausert Formula No. 252 - For Poison Oak and Poison Ivy

1. Grindellia plant 7
2. Lobelia herb 2
3. Quillaya bark..... 5
4. Hay seed..... 4
5. Sage 2
6. Comfrey root 4

Mix well and divide into 10 doses, using herbs especially cut for tea. Directions: Add one dose to a pint of boiling water, boil slowly for about 10 minutes, let stand until cool, then strain and apply cold to affected parts on saturated linens. Continue the application until the swelling is down and the itching has ceased, then apply ointment Formula No. 282. This treatment should be kept up until normal condition is restored.

Jethro Kloss considered lobelia to be one of the herbs especially useful for making poultices. Two of his recipes follow. Lobelia and Slippery Elm Poultice: Mix one-third part lobelia with two-thirds part slippery elm. It excellent for blood poisoning, boils, and abscesses. Also use it for rheumatism. Lobelia poultice: Mix 1 ounce of powdered lobelia and 1 ounce of powdered slippery elm; excellent for wound, fistulas, boils, felons, erysipelas, insect bites and stings.[33]

John Lust's Arthritis poultice for swollen joints

- Mullein leaves 6 parts
Slippery Elm bark 9 parts
Lobelia..... 3 parts
Cayenne..... 1 part

Add 3 oz. mixture to boiling water to make a paste. Spread the paste on a cloth and apply to the affected area.”[34]

[1] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397, 395.

[2] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com

[3] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com.

[4] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com.

[5] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com.

[6] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com., p. 10.

[7] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com., p. 11.

- [8] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com, p. 11.
- [9] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com, p. 11-12
- [10] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com, p. 15.
- [11] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, Formulas, www.swsbn.com, p. 17.
- [12] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, p. 18.
- [13] Colby, A Guide to Health, third edition, 1846, p. 18.
- [14] Kloss, Back to Eden, pp. 143, 145-146; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, pp. 399
- [15] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 400; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 145;
http://www.herbs2000.com/herbs/herbs_lobelia.htm
- [16] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 400.
- [17] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 146; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 399.
- [18] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 147 ; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 398
- [19] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 398-399; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 149-150
- [20] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 147-148.
- [21] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, pp. 578, 580, 581, 583, 585, 587, 591-594, 596, and book jacket.
- [22] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 586
- [23] Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 13.
- [24] Christopher, Dr. Christopher's Guide to Colon Health, p. 45.
- [25] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 585
- [26] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, pp. 401
- [27] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 399
- [28] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 400
- [29] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 400
- [30] Keim, Comfort for the Burned and Wounded, p. 40, 44
- [31] Lust, The Herb Book, part 2, p. 252 and part 3 pp. 440, 449 and 450.
- [32] Mausert, Mausert's Formulae, extracted from: Herbs for Health, pp. 4, 5, 11, 18, 46, and 56.
- [33] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, pp. 72, 73, 76.
- [34] Lust, The Herb Book, section 3, p. 440

DOSAGES AND APPLICATIONS OF LOBELIA

Lobelia can be used in a large variety of ways. Effective preparations include: decoction, fluid extract, infusion, pills or capsules, poultice, ointment, powdered herb or seed, syrup, and acid tincture. Lobelia can even be smoked for asthma or used as an enema.[1]

Heat destroys most of the medicinal properties of the lobelia so when making tea an infusion is preferable to a decoction. To make an infusion, pour 1 cup boiling water over 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoons dried leaves; steep 10-15 minutes. Drink 3 times per day.[2] If using the seed it is best to crush them so the medicinal properties can be released into the liquid. A decoction of the herb is still useful as an emetic, the dose is 1/2 cupful.[3] Tea is not the preferred method because of lobelia's acrid taste.[4]

Tincture, especially the acid tincture made with vinegar is the very best way to use lobelia. It is safer and more effective this way than any other form. The acid tincture is extremely versatile, and with a little creativity is appropriate for most if not all of the conditions that lobelia can be used for. The tincture is especially valuable for croup, asthma, lockjaw, and ringworm. The tincture can be made from the green or dried herb. A tincture made of the seeds is much more potent.[5]

In addition to internal uses the acid tincture and even the alcohol tincture can be used externally as a rub for relaxation, rubbed on the neck and chest and between the shoulders to break up congestion. This is especially good for babies with mucus and spasmodic congestion problems as some feel it is better not to give lobelia internally to infants. It's relaxing effect can be balanced with cayenne, peppermint or other stimulants if desired. Combined with Cayenne or another stimulant it is great for a chest or sinus rub. One other external use is for earache. Place a few drops of warm lobelia tincture in the ear and plug with cotton.[6]

Dosages vary greatly from one herbal to the next often influenced by the author's opinion of the safety or danger of the use of lobelia. Some feel strongly that lobelia is a low dosage botanical and should never be used as an emetic. Others though they realize it must be used wisely, are not afraid of it because they believe an overdose is virtually impossible due to the emetic properties of the herb. It is wise to start with a small dose and increase or repeat doses till the desired results are obtained.[7]

The anticipated results and the condition being treated also affect dosage. A good example of this is in treating asthma and croup. In a crisis situation, such as an asthma attack, relatively large doses are given along with warm herbal tea to

encourage vomiting and expelling of mucus. In these situations a teaspoonful dose of the acetic tincture is repeated every 10-30 minutes till vomiting occurs.[8] One man took three tablespoonful doses. Afterwards he said, “. . . *My breathing was so difficult that I took a tablespoonful of the acid tincture of lobelia, and in about three or four minutes my breathing was as free as it ever was. I took another in ten minutes, after which I took a third, which I felt through every part of my body, even to the ends of my toes.*”[9] For a more long range therapeutic approach, working at nourishing and healing over a length of time lesser amounts are used combined with other herbs.[10] Or for the squeamish who are not in a life or death situation, just enough lobelia can be given to gain some decongestant/expectorant action without throwing up. “A Modern Herbal” listed “*5-30 drops every half-hour in elm or flaxseed infusion*” as an expectorant. Given cautiously this seems to be a low enough dosage to avoid vomiting.[11]

Amazingly lobelia is so powerful it has a noticeable effect even in very small amounts such as a dilution of 1:99. Those who feel lobelia is a low-dosage botanical say “5 drops of the acetous tincture taken three times daily (usually in marshmallow tea or with demulcent tinctures) should prove adequate.” Lobelia tincture is generally combined with other tinctures at the rate of 1 part lobelia tincture by volume: 10 parts of a mixture of other tinctures such as mullein, elecampane, thyme, hyssop, red root, echinacea, etc. by volume). This compound is taken at the basic dosage of one or two droppersful (30-60 drops) 3-5 times daily. Those leery of lobelia’s powerful actions give the caution “*Straight lobelia tinctures or compounds containing lobelia should be diluted in at least a full cup of water (240 ml) before ingestion.*”[12] I found an even stronger warning stating “*A total of 20 mg lobelia per day should not be exceeded. Doses higher than 500 mg are highly toxic and . . . could be fatal.*”[13]

Recommended doses for the acetic tincture (1:5) vary greatly from the overly cautious 5 drops three times a day to the more reasonable dose of 1 to 4 ml three times a day. Dr. Christopher suggested ½ to 1 teaspoonful doses (2-4 ml) and he never gave more than 3 doses in succession. “A Modern Herbal” tops them all with a suggested dose of 1 to 4 drachms. Most likely it is supposed to be a maximum daily dosage.[14]

Standard conservative dose for the tincture of lobelia is ½ ml three times per day with a maximum dosage of 2ml a day. The British Pharmaceutical Codex’s recommended dose for the tincture (1:8, 60 percent ethanol) is .4 to 1.6 milliliters up to three times a day. The largest suggested dose I found of the U.S.P. tincture was 1 to 4 drachms. That is equivalent to approximately 1/8 to ½ fluid ounce or 14 milliliters.[15]

Recommended doses for the fluid extract (1:1 in 50% alcohol) vary from 0.2 to 0.6 mL (5-15 drops) up to 0.5 to 1.5 mL (10-30 drops) three times per day. The difference in dosage makes sense when you look at the sources. The first source, www.adam.com also said lobelia is a potentially toxic herb, while the last suggested dosage was found in “School of Natural Healing”. The dose listed in “A Modern Herbal” is somewhere between the two at 10-20 drops.[16]

The dried herb in powder, capsules, pills, etc. recommended dosages vary as much as the extract and tinctures. According to the British Pharmaceutical Codex, 50-200 milligrams of dried herb three times a day is the recommended dose for asthma, chronic bronchitis, and spastic colon.[17] www.best-home-remedies.com said capsules commonly contain 395 milligrams, tablets 2 milligrams and lozenges 1 milligram.[18] Dr. Christopher’s recommended dose of the powdered herb (leaves, stems, flower and/or pods) was 200-650 milligrams.[19] An old home doctoring book gave the dose as 1-5 grains but “A Modern Herbal” gives the dose as 5-60 grains.[20] One grain is equal to 64.8 milligrams so “A Modern Herbal’s” dose equals a whopping 3888 milligrams. Really makes me wonder if the 0 is a typo and it should read 5-6 grains which would be 324-388.8 milligrams. All these different dosages can be quite confusing. To simplify things just follow Dr. Christopher’s dosage recommendations he used lobelia for years and I’m sure he knew what he was talking about.

For children adjust the recommended adult dose to account for the child’s weight. Most herbal dosages for adults are calculated on the basis of a 150 lb (70 kg) adult. Therefore if the child weighs 50 lb (20-25 kg), the appropriate dose of lobelia for this child would be 1/3 of the adult dose.[21]

Doses for four more preparations of lobelia follow. Dosage for syrup of lobelia 1 to 4 teaspoons or 1 to 4 drachms; solid extract 100-300 milligrams or 2 to 4 grains (129 to 259 mg); Etherial tincture, B.P., 5 to 15 drops. The solid extract and etherial tincture are no longer on the market as far as I know. It’s a good thing too. Dr. Christopher warned against the latter saying “Do not use lobelia tincture from drug stores, as it is extracted with an etheric menstruum.”[22] The solid extracts were inferior as well, being heat evaporated tars with many of their constituents oxidized by heat.[23] The oil of lobelia seed has also faded into history. Dosage was 1 drop rubbed up with 20 grains of ginger or triturated with one scruple of sugar and divided into 6 to 12 doses. This was considered useful as an expectorant, nauseant, sedative, and diaphoretic, when given every one or two hours.[24]

To use lobelia as an enema, also called internal bathing by some, follow these directions *“This herb may be administered by means of the internal bath, namely, taking a solution of one ounce of the powdered lobelia to a quart of water and*

injecting this solution into the intestines, through the rectum.” Dr. Christopher and Jethro Kloss both recommended adding lobelia to a catnip enema for fever, pneumonia, pleurisy, nephritis, hepatitis, meningitis, etc. The reason for this being *“The bowels are lined with tiny blood vessels which will absorb the herb into the system.”* – “Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs”[25]

Lobelia can be made into a poultice for external treatment of bruises, insect bites, sprains, felons, ringworm, erysipelas, and poison ivy irritation. Lobelia plasters and liniments are used to treat sprains, muscle spasms and bruises because of the plant’s relaxing and stimulating effect. Dr. Christopher instructed to make a compress or plaster of lobelia for swellings, pneumonia, pleurisy, boils, etc. For any external problems Dr. Christopher said “Apply a poultice consisting of 1 part lobelia and 2 parts slippery elm.” I’ve listed Jethro Kloss’s lobelia poultices with the formulas. Please refer to page 61 for information on them.[26]

Here are directions for making your very own lobelia tincture.

First off for a lobelia tincture we use vinegar rather than alcohol. Due to lobelia’s unique constituents and properties lobelia extracts made with vinegar are more effective than those made with alcohol and water. We use 4 oz. of the dry herb to 1 quart solvent in this case organic apple cider vinegar. Put the lobelia in a quart jar and cover with the vinegar. Macerate for two weeks. That means shake it every day when you go past. When the 14 days are up, strain the vinegar out of the lobelia. Put the herb in a cheese cloth and squeeze to get as much good out of it as you can. Compost the spent herb and store your lobelia tincture for future use in a dark glass bottle. [27]

[1] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 144; Page, How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist, p. 198; Meyer, The Herbalist, p. 75.

[2] Hoffman, Healthy Bones & Joints, ch. 4, p. 86

[3] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397.

[4] <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>

[5] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397, 394.

[6] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 398; Chevallier, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants p. 108; Royal, Herbally Yours, ch. 2, p. 24; Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 13.

[7] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397; Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p.12-13

[8] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 402; Goodenough, The Favorite Medical Receipt Book and Home Doctor, Department 5, p. 569; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 144.

[9] Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 145.

[10] Hopkins, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, p. 13.

[11] Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.

[12] Cech, Making Plant Medicine, part 2, p. 167.

[13] <http://www.adam.com/democontent/IMCAccess/ConsHerbs/Lobeliach.html>

- [14] Cech, Making Plant Medicine, part 2, p. 167; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397; <http://www.adam.com/democontent/IMCAccess/ConsHerbs/Lobeliach.html>, Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.
- [15] Hoffman, Healthy Bones & Joints, ch. 4, p. 87; Karch, The Consumer's Guide to Herbal Medicine, ch. 6, p. 128; <http://www.adam.com/democontent/IMCAccess/ConsHerbs/Lobeliach.html>, Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.
- [16] <http://www.adam.com/democontent/IMCAccess/ConsHerbs/Lobeliach.html>; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397; Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.
- [17] Karch, The Consumer's Guide to Herbal Medicine, ch. 6, p. 128.
- [18] http://www.best-home-remedies.com/herbal_medicine/herbs/lobelia.htm
- [19] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397
- [20] Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.
- [21] <http://www.adam.com/democontent/IMCAccess/ConsHerbs/Lobeliach.html>
- [22] Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397; Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.
- [23] Moore, An Herbal/Medical Dictionary, p. 21.
- [24] Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495.
- [25] Kadans, Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs, p. 148 Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 397; Kloss, Back to Eden, section 2, p. 142.
- [26] Lust, The Herb Book, part 2, p. 253; Mabey, The New Age Herbalist, ch. 1, p. 36; Christopher, School of Natural Healing, ch. 10, p. 398.
- [27] Christopher, Dr. Christopher's Guide to Colon Health, ch. 3, p. 57; Grieve, A Modern Herbal, p. 495; Christopher and Gileadi, Every Woman's Herbal, p. 206; Cech, Making Plant Medicine.

LOBELIA - PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I must admit to spending more time researching and writing about lobelia than actually using it. If prizes were given for spending the most hours on a thesis I would probably win first prize. I spent three weeks, Monday through Saturday researching, and putting together all this information. Most of those days were ten plus hours, some days, I started at 7:00 and kept at it till past 10:00 with only short breaks throughout the day. If you figure, 18 days at an average of 10 hours a day it comes to 180 hours. If you figure my time as being worth \$10.00 an hour, this thesis is worth \$1800.00.

Even though I have spent more time writing about the marvelous properties of lobelia than putting it to use I love to use it. After learning so much more about it, I'm sure I will use it even more in the future. It is certainly an herb I would never want to be without. Several years ago, we grew some lobelia plants to sell. At the time I knew very little of the wonder of the plant and enough of the warnings to be afraid of it. Because of this, I never did anything with it and what we didn't sell, died right in its pots. After that, we decided not to bother growing it as it was too dangerous to use anyway being a "poisonous" herb. How I would long to have those plants now. I tried unsuccessfully to germinate the seeds this spring and last year. It's important enough to me though, that I think I will place a special seed order, to try growing my own lobelia again.

The first person to receive lobelia from my hands, as I recall, was my little sister. We were planning on having a family outing and she was sick to her stomach. She said she feels like throwing up but can't. I gave her some peppermint tea and then with some trepidation a teaspoon of lobelia. This obviously did not poison her, so ten minutes later I gave her another dose. I thought perhaps two teaspoons would do the trick since she was only a child weighing around eighty pounds. After more time had passed and the desired effect was not realized, I gave her a third. It did the trick; she threw up soon afterward and said she felt much better. In this case, lobelia didn't save a life, but it sure saved the day. This experience proved to me what the Eclectics claimed "that lobelia's action on children is gentler and they are less liable to be unpleasantly affected with lobelia than adults.[1]

I have put together a lot of Dr. Christopher's formulas with lobelia for our own use, in the past year. Formulas I have made and use include, Lower Bowel, Mullein and Lobelia, Bone, Flesh and Cartilage, antispasmodic tincture, Calcium, Resp-Free, and Herbal Tooth powder. Experiences using some of these formulas follow.

My brother's neck was swollen, especially right behind the ears. Thankfully he was game enough to let me put a mullein and lobelia fomentation around his neck as high as we could get it. The next morning it was better, so much so that we never repeated the treatment.

My siblings and I were having fun sledding, skiing and snowboarding in January. I was talking to one of my brothers and absent mindedly stepped backward, directly into the path of my little, big brother (younger than me, but bigger) on a snowboard. The snow board hit me hard on the heel; I was knocked over with the impact. No bones were broken, but it hurt. After we got home, I brewed up some BF&C tea and soaked my foot in it for awhile. I also made around 200 capsules and took them over the next few days. Eventually a bruise came to the surface, so I concluded that the bone was badly bruised rather than broken. I feel that if I wouldn't have had the BF&C I would have had a lot more pain. If I felt discomfort, I took BF&C and the pain went away. I thought my foot healed remarkably fast.

When reading about lobelia I came across a use I hadn't thought of before; external antispasmodic. Since the muscles in my back were tight and cramped from working at the computer I decided to try it and see if it works. I took some antispasmodic tincture I had made and rubbed it into my back. It was a little difficult to apply but I got it done. I really think it helped.

Just this morning, (May 12, 2006) my brother complained of a belly ache. Remembering that lobelia has also been used to calm an upset stomach, and he was coughing up a storm as well, I decided to try it. Though he didn't appreciate the taste, he did admit that it took his belly ache away and helped his cough. I didn't hear any difference, but he must have felt a difference. I only gave him one teaspoonful, as I knew he wouldn't appreciate throwing up and I was aiming to settle his stomach.

A story showing that lobelia is even safe for babies. An Amish customer asked for lobelia. I was out of the dried lobelia and the only tincture I had in stock was an alcohol tincture. Someone had told her to give her baby lobelia to expel the mucus that was troubling her. I said I would give her some that I had made up with vinegar since there is no sense giving a baby alcohol when the herb works better in a vinegar tincture. I wasn't really sure how much she should give her, being a baby and all, but needing the expectorant properties of the herb. I suggested 10 drops or so, in three consecutive doses or whatever she is comfortable with. Just today (April 27 2006) she stopped in to buy a eucalyptus plant and I questioned her as to whether it worked or not. She said she gave up to 15-20 drops as often as 6 consecutive times with no adverse effects. Rather than giving her more lobelia, she used her finger to gag her and make her throw up. The baby expelled a lot of mucus

and is doing much better. The mother seemed happy with the results. She did not give her peppermint tea as she refuses to take teas.

I even used lobelia and antispasmodic tincture on our German shepherd with good success. One cold snowy day, I noticed he was acting a little strange, sitting quite still. I didn't pay much attention to him as I was pretty busy. Towards evening the younger children came running in to the house saying "Shep is dying". He was laid out on the snow, seemingly paralyzed and shaking uncontrollably. I ran for the lobelia and antispasmodic tincture after telling my siblings to get him off the snow and into the barn. I poured the rest of both bottles, not sure which I gave first, down his throat. After the first shot, he got up and tried to get away, but he was too weak. After the second dose he ran for his dog house with his tail between his legs. The next day, he seemed as fine as ever. We will never know for sure what was the matter with him. There is a possibility it was rabies, since our puppy died a short time later of rabies.

In all fairness I must also give my failures. These I believe were mostly due to the fact that the cases were too far advanced. The first unsuccessful case was our puppy. We knew she had been bitten by a possibly rabid raccoon. I looked up rabies in "Back to Eden" and came across lobelia and antispasmodic tincture as possible cures. The next few days we gave her sporadic doses of lobelia and antispasmodic tincture neither of which she appreciated. We grew tired of treating our difficult patient, my brother had to hold her down and pry her mouth open so I could give it to her and getting caught up in the business of life, pushed it out of our mind. A few weeks later, she began to show signs of rabies. Then, though she attempted to bite us, we gave her as much lobelia and antispasmodic tincture as we could. It was very difficult to get much in to her at this point and the disease too far advanced. Within forty-eight hours she was dead. The rabies test proved positive. Though this story has a sad ending, I do not feel it is the fault of lobelia but rather that the administrators were not faithful enough in giving large enough quantities to prevent the onset of this deadly "incurable" disease. The lesson is, give enough to do the job, rather than lobelia doesn't work.

Two other unfortunate cases involved two of our goats. One morning my brother came in saying, You need to come out and do something for Hornless, one of our milking goats. The goat was nearly dead, having overdosed on oats the day before. I really wasn't sure what to do, since Vernon, my brother, said it is difficult for goats to throw up. I gave it some echinacea to start with, and then some peppermint tea followed by some lobelia tea, since I couldn't find the tincture. Soon after, the goat seemed to go into a coma after seeming to have difficulty breathing. A few hours later, she was declared dead by Marvin, a younger brother. Only a few days ago, it happened again, Hornless's kid is dying, you better come

quickly. I told my brother I'm tired of being called when it is too late. The kid was obviously dying, being too weak to move and was having trouble breathing. Vernon thought it had gotten into the neighbors sprayed field and was poisoned. I knew that lobelia has been used as an antidote to poison, so I again grabbed my lobelia tincture and a little cayenne. We gave it some of the cayenne, which seemed to perk it up a little bit, followed by lobelia. Almost immediately it shook its head and seemed to be trying to throw up, unsuccessfully. We're not sure when it stopped breathing, it was hard to tell but it was within an hour. Even after these unfortunate cases, I don't believe lobelia is a poison. I am beginning to wonder though if lobelia is an appropriate herb for goats. Next time I do believe I'll try something else. If I would have been treating people, I probably would have been stuck in jail for three accounts of murder. I do not view it that way though as all three of these unfortunate cases were animals that were going to die anyway.

[1] Ellingwood, American Materia Medica, Therapeutics and Pharmacognosy, Lobelia, p. 279

LOBELIA - BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, M. Kat, Indian Tobacco, Plant Guide, USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center, Online, 4/17/2006.
- Beers, Mark H., and Berkow, Robert, The Merck Manual, 17th edition, White House Station, N.J., 1999.
- Castle, Frederick A., Wood's Household Practice of Medicine, Hygiene and Surgery, v. 2. New York, William Wood and Company, 1880.
- Cech, Richo, Making Plant Medicine. Williams, Oregon.: Horizon Herbs, LLC, 2000.
- Chevallier, Andrew, The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants, A Practical Reference Guide to More than 550 Key Medicinal Plants and Their Uses, 1st American edition. New York, New York: DK Publishing Inc., 1996.
- Christopher, David, Dr. John Raymond Christopher, An Herbal Legacy of Courage. Springville, Utah: Christopher Publications, 1993.
- Christopher, Dr. John R. and Gileadi, Cathy, Every Woman's Herbal. Springville, Utah: Christopher Publications, 1998.
- Christopher, Dr. John R., Dr. Christopher's Guide to Colon Health. Springville, Utah: Christopher Publications, Inc., 2003.
- Christopher, Dr. John R., School of Natural Healing, Herbal Reference Guide, 25th Anniversary. Springville, Utah.: Christopher Publications, Feb. 2001.
- Colby, Benjamin, A Guide to Health Being an Exposition of the Principles of the Thomsonian System of Practice, and their Mode of Application in the Cure of Every Form of Disease; Embracing a Concise View of the Various Theories of Ancient and Modern Practice, Third edition, enlarged and revised. Milford, N.H., John Burns, 1846.
- Crouse, L. Vicky and Reiley, James S., Lobelia inflata, 1998-2004, Natural Opinion, <http://www.naturalopinion.com/report/HtmlPages/Lobelia.htm>, 4/24/2006.
- Dobelis, Inge N., Magic and Medicine of Plants, 1st edition. Pleasantville, New York: Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1998.
- Ellingwood, Finley, American Materia Medica, Therapeutics and Pharmacognosy. Chicago, 1919. Southwest School of Botanical Medicine, Online, www.swsbm.com/Manuals, Resource Discovery Network-Resource Finder, 4/27/2006.
- Ellis, Sandra K. Livingston, Dr. Mom's Healthy Living. Utah: Dr. Mom's Healthy Living, LC, 2004.
- Elpel, Thomas J., Botany in a Day, The Patterns Method of Plant Identification, 5th edition. Pony, Montana: Hops Press, LLC, 2004.

- Foster, Steven and Duke, James, Peterson Field Guides, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants and Herbs, 2nd edition. New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.
- Goodenough, Josephus, The Favorite Medical Receipt Book and Home Doctor, Comprising the Favorite Remedies of Over One Hundred of the World's Best Physicians and Nurses. Detroit, Michigan: F.B. Dickerson CO., 1903.
- Grieve, Mrs. M., A Modern Herbal, unabridged republication of original (1931) edition, v. 2. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 1982.
- Hobbs, Christopher, Medicinal Plant Constituents, Symbols of Healing Energy, Draft. Botanica Press, 1996.
- Hoffman, David L., Lobelia, Health World Online, Online, <http://www.healthy.net/asp/templates/article.asp?PageType=article&ID=1409>, 4/17/2006.
- Hoffman, David, Healthy Bones & Joints. North Adams, MA: Storey Publishing, 2000.
- Hopkins, Rick and Diane, Stock Your Medicine Cabinet Herbally, Spanish Fork, Utah: Latter-day Family Resources, 1998.
- Hylton, William H., The Rodale Herb Book, How to Use, Grow, and Buy Nature's Miracle Plants. Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press, 1975.
- Jackson, Deb and Bergeron, Karen, Lobelia, Online, http://altnature.com/gallery/Blue_Lobelia.htm, 4/24/2006.
- Kadans, Joseph M., Modern Encyclopedia of Herbs. New York, New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1993.
- Karch, Steven B., The Consumer's Guide to Herbal Medicine, A Professional Medical Review of the Most Popular Medicinal and Performance Enhancing Herbs, 1st edition. Hauppauge, New York: Advanced Research Press, 1999
- Keim, John, W., Comfort for the Burned and Wounded. Quakertown, Pa.: The Philosophical Publishing Company, 1999.
- King, King's American Dispensatory, 1898, Henriettes Herbal.com, online www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/kings/lobelia.html, 4/27/2006.
- Kloss, Jethro, Back to Eden The Classic Guide to Herbal Medicine, Natural Foods and Home Remedies since 1939, Revised and Expanded 2nd edition. Twin Lakes, WI.: Lotus Press, 1999.
- Lloyd, John Uri, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica, Bulletin No. 18, Pharmacy Series, No. 4, History of the Vegetable Drugs of the Pharmacopeia of the United States. Cincinnati, Ohio: J.U. & C.G. Lloyd, 1911.
- Lloyd, John Uri, Bulletin of the Lloyd Library of Botany, Pharmacy and Materia Medica, Bulletin No. 11, Reproduction Series, No.7, Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson, and a history of The Thomsonian Materia Medica, as shown in "The New Guide to Health,"(1835), and the literature of that day. Cincinnati, Ohio: J.U. & C. G. Lloyd, 1909.

- Lust, John, *The Herb Book*, 1st edition. New York, N.Y.: Benedict Lust Publications, 1974.
- Mabey, Richard, *The New Age Herbalist*, How to use herbs for healing, nutrition, body care, and relaxation. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.
- Mausert, Dr. Otto, *Mausert's Formulae extracted from: Herbs for Health, A Guide to Health by Natural Means*. San Francisco, California: published by Dr. Otto Mausert, 1932.
- Meyer, Joseph E., *The Herbalist*, revised and enlarged edition. United States: no publisher given, 1960.
- Moore, Michael, *An Herbal/Medical Dictionary*. Bisbee, AZ: Southwest School of Botanical Medicine, Electronic media, sunsite.unc.edu/pub/academic/medicine/alternative-healthcare/Southwest-School-of-Botanical-Medicine.
- Moore, Michael, *Herb Formulas for Clinic and Home*. Bisbee, AZ: Southwest School of Botanical Medicine, Electronic media, sunsite.unc.edu/pub/academic/medicine/alternative-healthcare/Southwest-School-of-Botanical-Medicine.
- Page, Linda Rector, *How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist*, Revised New Edition. Carmel Valley, CA: Healthy Healing Publications, 1997.
- Royal, Penny C., *Herbally Yours*, Orem, Utah: BiWorld Publishers Inc., 1979.
- Scully, Virginia, *A Treasury of American Indian Herbs*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1970.
- , Food and Drugs, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 21, V. 5, From the U.S Government Printing Office via GPO access, revised as of April 1, 2002, Sec. 310.544, Drug products containing active ingredients offered over-the-counter, Online, [http://www.fda.gov/cder/octmonographs/Smoking_Deterrant/smoking_deterrent\(310.544\).4/28/2006](http://www.fda.gov/cder/octmonographs/Smoking_Deterrant/smoking_deterrent(310.544).4/28/2006).
- , Lobelia Herb – Uses and Side Effects, Best Home Remedies, Online, http://www.best-home-remedies.com/herbal_medicine/herbs/lobelia.htm. 4/24/2006
- , Lobelia, 2002, <http://www.adam.com/democontent/IMCAccess/ConsHerbs/Lobeliach.html> 4/24/2006.
- , Lobelia, 2003, Metagenics, Genetic Potential Through Nutrition, Online, <http://metagenics.com/resources/imc/OneMedicineProf/ProfHerbs/Lobelia.html>, 5/4/2006.
- , Lobelia, Herbs 2000.com, Online, http://www.herbs200.com/herbs/herbs_lobelia.htm. 4/24/2006.
- , Nutritional Information, Farmacopia Clinical Supplementation, LLC, Online, www.farmacopia.net/nutrient_herbs.html, 5/4/2006.
- , *Physician's Desk Reference for Herbal Medicine*, 1st edition. Montvale, NJ: Medical Economics Company, Inc., 1998.

- , Plants Profile for Lobelia inflata (Indian Tobacco) USDA PLANTS, Online, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=LOIN>, 4/17/2006.
- , The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, volumes 2, 4, and 5. Farmington Hills, MI: An International Thomson Company, 1999.
- , Unsubstantiated Claims and Documented Health Hazards in the Dietary Supplement Market Place, section (Illnesses and Injuries Associated with the Use of Selected Dietary Supplements), 1993, U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, Online, <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/-dms/ds-ill.html>, 4/28/2006.

Addendum from The Eclectic Materia Medica, Pharmacology

Lobelia inflata

Nicotiana tabacum

The leaves, tops, and seeds of *Lobelia inflata*, Linné (Nat. Ord. Lobeliaceae). Abundant in the United States. *Dose*, 1 to 60 grains.

Common Names.—*Lobelia*, Indian Tobacco, Wild Tobacco, Puke Weed, Emetic Weed, Emetic Herb, Vomit Weed, etc.

Principal Constituents.—The unstable liquid alkaloid *lobeline*, combined with *lobelic acid*; fixed and volatile oil, and an unimportant nonbasic substance, *inflatin*. The so-called *lobelacrin* of Enders is probably lobeline lobeliate.

Preparations.—1. *Specific Medicine Lobelia*. *Dose*, 1/10 to 60 drops. (Usual form of administration: Rx Specific Medicine Lobelia, 5-30 drops; Water, enough to make 4 fluidounces. Mix. Sig.: One teaspoonful every 1 to 3 hours.)

2. *Subculoyd Lobelia*. *Dose*, 1 to 30 drops. Designed chiefly for hypodermatic use.

3. *Pulvis Lobelia Compositus*, Compound Powder of Lobelia (Emetic Powder). Contains Lobelia (6), bloodroot (3), skunk cabbage (3), ipecac (4), capsicum (1). *Dose*, as an emetic, 2 drachms in broken doses of ¼ to ½ drachm, in warm water, every 15 minutes. Used chiefly locally.

4. *Tinctura Lobelia Composita*, Compound Tincture of Lobelia, (Acetous Emetic Tincture, Expectorant Tincture). *Dose*, ½ to 3 fluidrachms.

5. *Libradol*. For external use.

Specific Indications.—Fullness of tissue, with full veins and full arterial flow; full labored and doughy pulse, the blood current moving with difficulty; short, labored breathing; sense of suffocation; dyspnea with praecordial oppression; pain in chest of a heavy, sore, or oppressive character; pulmonary apoplexy (full dose); mucous accumulations in the bronchi; dry croupal cough, with scant or oversecretion; asthmatic seizures; short, lancinating pain radiating from heart to left shoulder and arm; spasmodic muscular contraction; muscular rigidity; infantile convulsions from irritation of the bowels, or from respiratory obstruction; hysterical convulsions; rigid os uteri with thick doughy and unyielding rim; perineal and vaginal rigidity during labor; angina pectoris (full doses).

Action.—*Lobelia* apparently acts upon the central nervous system, the myoneural junction of the muscles of volition, and the sympathetic nerve ganglia, and by some is classed with the nicotine group in pharmacological effects. It is a powerful gastro-intestinal irritant, producing emesis. Should it fail to vomit, which is rare, purgation may result. In large doses a state of near-collapse is induced. Small doses act upon the

cardiac inhibitory apparatus, slowing the heart action, but this is followed by a more or less accelerated pulse. During the depressive stage blood-pressure is lowered, but subsequently becomes increased. Small doses stimulate, and large doses paralyze the respiratory centers and the vagal terminals and ganglia in the bronchi and lungs, death, when it occurs (in animals), resulting from respiratory paralysis (asphyxia). Lobelia is most largely eliminated by the kidney, though some is thought to be excreted by the skin.

If lobelia be chewed it causes an acrid, prickling, and persistently pungent sensation in the throat and fauces, accompanied by slight nausea and a feeling of warmth and distention along the esophageal tract and in the stomach. The sensation is not very unlike that produced by tobacco. The salivary glands and those of the mouth are impressed, pouring out saliva and mucus in abundance. A sense of epigastric depression succeeds, followed by profound nausea, and if the amount chewed be large enough, severe and thorough emesis results. The gastric mucus is secreted in great abundance and ejected with the contents of the stomach. The emetic action of lobelia is extremely depressing, and is usually accompanied by profuse perspiration. Oppressive prostration, relaxation of the muscular system, and a languid pulse accompany the emetic stage. The depression, however, is of short duration, and is immediately followed by a sense of extreme satisfaction and repose. Under its action the mental powers are unusually acute, and the muscles are powerfully relaxed. The circulation is enfeebled by large and strengthened by small doses, and the bronchial secretions are augmented.

Lobelia, in the ordinary sense of the term, is not a lethal poison. Undoubtedly its injudicious use has and might produce death, but the same is true of many other drugs that are not ordinarily considered as poisons. That the alkaloid lobeline will kill animals has been fully demonstrated. A drop of the alkaloidal solution placed upon the tongue of a strong, healthy man instantly vomited him. To this property of its alkaloid is undoubtedly due the failure of lobelia to act upon man as a lethal agent. Its emetic action is so prompt and decided that the contained alkaloid does not, under ordinary circumstances, produce fatal results. Given in cases in extremis, the resulting exhaustion from repeated emesis would very likely hasten death, but death would be more likely due to the act of vomiting exhausting the patient than to any poisonous effect of the lobelia.

Therapy.—*External.* Infusion of lobelia, or the alcoholic preparations diluted and constantly applied by means of compresses, are among the most efficient applications

in rhus poisoning. A lotion or a poultice (with flaxseed or elm) often relieves insect bites and stings, articular pain, the pain of bruises and sprains, and sometimes causes relaxation in strangulated hernia, and relieves the discomfort of erysipelatous inflammation. Powdered lobelia sprinkled upon a larded cloth and applied warm, or the compound emetic powder similarly used, is an invaluable local application to the chest in acute thoracic diseases, and gives marked relief from pleural and muscular pains and alleviates the sense of suffocation and fullness accompanied by a feeling of soreness within the chest. Libradol is a more cleanly application and owing to the presence of glycerin is more or less dehydrating, thus making it a preferable application in swellings, bunions, and inflammatory affections of the joints. Libradol, or a lotion of equal parts of glycerin and the specific medicine, provides a grateful application to relieve pain and reduce tumefaction in orchitis and epididymitis; the lotion is the more easily applied.

Libradol is an exceedingly efficient local application in many disorders, to relieve pain and reduce local inflammations. It is not a cure-all, but covers two definite fields of action—the relief of disease conditions presenting:

- (1) Pain and inflammation, with or without exudation, as occur in pneumonia, broncho-pneumonia, bronchitis, croup, pleurisy, acute pharyngitis, tonsillitis, orchitis, ovaritis, arthritis, synovitis, inflammatory rheumatism, boils, and bunions.
- (2) Localized pain, along nerve courses, in joints, and in the muscular structures, as in some forms of rheumatism (subacute, non-inflammatory, articular, etc.), lumbago, facial, subscapular, and intercostal neuralgia, pleurodynia, and neuritis.

The specific indications for Libradol are: Pain with or without swelling or inflammation; inflammation with serous or mucous exudation; sharp, lancinating pain in the chest, aggravated by respiratory or other movements; congestion and engorgement of parts; dyspnea; soreness in the pectoral region; dull, aching pain; subcutaneous and thecal inflammations; pain of syphilitic nodes and lymphatic swellings.

Pulvis Lobeliae Compositus or *Compound Emetic Powder* is seldom used for the purpose indicated by its name a purpose for which it was originally intended and which it admirably fulfills. It is for its effects when applied locally in broncho-pulmonic affections that it is so highly valued and that has caused it to outlive many other old Eclectic compounds. How it acts—how it can produce the results it does—remains yet a mystery and can not easily be explained scientifically, but that it does act, and very decidedly, is a well attested clinical fact, and its certainty makes it a remedy that we

will not be likely to part with. It is the first application thought of by many when desiring an outward application in acute bronchitis, pleurisy, pneumonia, pleurodynia, and soreness of the pectoral walls. A well-larded cloth is sprinkled with the powder. This is then well warmed and applied directly to the chest. Goose fat probably is the best penetrating medium for its exhibition, and singularly recent scientific tests of the penetrability of fatty bodies has yielded the highest place to goose fat. Once more has science recognized the wisdom of the domestic medicationists, whose only claim to skill rested on their discriminatory clinical observation. The emetic powder may be freely used without danger of unpleasant consequences. It takes the place of the heavy poultices and thus gives little or no discomfort to the patient. If a cotton jacket (best prepared by lining an undershirt or waist with a uniform layer of cotton) be worn over the larded cloth the effects are all that can be desired from external applications. Petrolatum is substituted for other greases by some physicians.

Internal. From the early days of Eclecticism lobelia, through Thomsonian introduction, has been a valued medicine. Many properties were once ascribed it of which little note is now taken. Its chief uses, however, were as an emetic, expectorant, and antispasmodic, fulfilling all of these offices to the admiration of its prescribers. As an emetic it was regarded as not only prompt but efficient, but in order to render it safer and more efficacious, it was often combined with other substances, notably capsicum and ipecacuanha. Either as an expectorant or emetic, as the urgency of cases required, it was in free use in croup, whooping cough, asthma, dyspnea simulating asthma, and pneumonia. In fevers it was used as a relaxant and to modify the circulation. When used as an expectorant it was usually combined with tincture of bloodroot, syrup of senega, wine of ipecac, or oxymel of squill. Doses of lobelia sufficient to excite nausea and relaxation were employed in epilepsy, chorea, cramps, hysteria, tetanus, strychnine poisoning, and other convulsive attacks. Internally, or by enema, it was largely employed to overcome rigidity of the uterus during labor, but its specific applicability, as now known, was not then differentiated. As a relaxant, when employed by rectal enema and in fomentations, it was highly regarded in treating strangulated hernia and other intestinal obstructions; and to release muscular contracture in tedious labors, and to facilitate the setting of fractures and reducing of dislocations. In extreme cases, oil of lobelia was employed and entered into liniments for severe neuralgic and rheumatic complaints. The infusion was used in ophthalmia; the tincture locally in sprains, bruises, rheumatic pains, erysipelatous and similar inflammations, eczema and other cutaneous diseases, and in poisoning by ivy. Poultices of lobelia were similarly employed. These were the days prior to the advent of specific medication through which

a better understanding of the use of lobelia was acquired. Of these uses only the occasional employment still survives for the same purposes in croup, asthma, whooping cough, dyspnea, children's convulsions, rigid os, and the local surface disorders named.

Lobelia is nauseant, emetic, expectorant, relaxant, antispasmodic, diaphoretic, sialagogue, sedative, and, secondarily, occasionally cathartic and diuretic and astringent. It is in no sense a narcotic. As an emetic lobelia is now seldom employed. In selected cases where a systemic emetic effect is desired it may still be employed with benefit. By a systemic emetic we mean one which, like lobelia, not only causes emesis, but reacts profoundly upon the nervous, circulatory, and secretory apparatus of the whole body, so that marked relaxation takes place and the stomach yields up a great quantity of thick, ropy mucus. Such an effect is sometimes desirable as a preparatory treatment for the better receptivity of medicines that would otherwise remain unabsorbed by the stomach, or when antiperiodics act indifferently or irritatingly unless a good cleaning of the stomach and relaxation of nervous tension are first insured. This is notably true of quinine, and often of the special or arterial sedatives. Though momentarily depressing, the reaction is decidedly beneficial, and it may well be used when depression is not too great to begin with, and the tongue is expressionless and foully coated at the base. In such instances we believe it should still be used in emetic doses in some chronic disorders of the stomach, and especially in the incipient stage of intermittent and other allied fevers. We have seen it arouse from a general sluggish condition of atony those who have been ill for months and start them on the way to better health. When the emetic action of lobelia is desired, small doses of specific medicine lobelia, or of the powder in warm water, should be frequently administered until profound nausea is induced; then the medicine should be pushed rapidly to emesis. Large draughts of warm (not hot) water will hasten its action and render the act of vomiting easier. Lobelia should never be given to children or the old and feeble as an emetic; nor is it admissible in ordinary cases of poisoning, where depression may be increased by it. Such are to be treated with stimulating emetics.

The powerfully relaxant properties of lobelia make it an efficient drug where the spasmodic element is a factor. As of old, nauseant doses may be given to relax hysterical convulsions, worm convulsions, the convulsions of dentition, and other convulsive disorders of children. When mildly asthenic, lobelia may be used alone; when sthenic, bromide of potassium or gelsemium may be given with it. Usually, however, the indications are present for all three medicines. The best combination of drugs we have personal knowledge of for the relief of convulsions of childhood caused

by errors of diet, such as the ingestion of half-comminuted bananas, nuts, or shredded cocoanut cakes, or of fresh flour dough, is the following: Rx Specific Medicine Lobelia, and Specific Medicine Gelsemium, 1 fluidrachm each; Potassium Bromide, 1 drachm; Water, enough for 4 fluidounces. Mix. Sig.: One teaspoonful every five minutes until complete relaxation is insured; then every two hours for a day. The warm bath and the enema should not be neglected. If convulsions are due to dentition or to the onset of infectious diseases, good will have been accomplished by placing the system in repose and giving a better receptibility for other medication. Lobelia is of little value in epileptic convulsions, and is rarely of service in tetanus. It has been used in strychnine poisoning, but is not to be commended, especially if given late, lest attempts at emesis provoke the already greatly excited reflexes and precipitate repeated paroxysms; and less than emetic doses would have absolutely no value. In puerperal eclampsia, in which it has also been advised, it is not to be compared with veratrum, gelsemium and chloroform in efficiency. When intestinal obstructions are due to a spasmodic state of the intestines it may be of service, as in intussusception and fecal impaction; and it may relax and relieve a strangulated hernia. Too much time must not be consumed in attempts at medication in these serious disorders, and an early resort to surgery is advisable. Spasmodic colic in both adults and children is sometimes quickly relieved by lobelia. In fact very small doses prove the very best treatment in colic of very young infants. For spasmodic croup and spasmodic asthma lobelia in nauseant doses is without a peer in drug therapeutics.

Lobelia is *the* drug for angina pectoris, neuralgia of the heart, and pulmonary apoplexy. Though evanescent in its action, large doses of specific medicine lobelia (about 20 drops) may be administered with the expectation of relieving the patient. The dose may be repeated as necessary. Lobelia is a cardiac stimulant, therefore we class it with the sedatives, for all arterial or special sedatives in medicinal (small) doses are heart stimulants. When the circulation exhibits a markedly slow pulse-wave it will be better corrected by lobelia than by any other drug. In fact the most prominent indication for lobelia is the full, oppressed, sluggish, doughy pulse. Associate this with praecordial oppression, thoracic pain, difficult breathing, soreness or bruised feeling within the chest, nausea with tongue heavily coated at the base, fullness of tissue, and we have before us a fair range of the action of the drug. It is a good remedy in cardiac congestion.

Lobelia is of specific value in obstetrical practice. It powerfully subdues muscular rigidity. It is one of the remedies to overcome a rigid os, during parturition, and at the

same time it relaxes the perineal tissues, thus defending the parts against lacerations. This specific effect of lobelia has won many converts to specific medication. This it does when there is fullness of tissue—a thick, doughy, yet unyielding os uteri; when, however, the edge of the os is thin and closely drawn, sharp like a knife edge, full doses of gelsemium are indicated. For this antispasmodic action lobelia may be given in nauseant doses, preferably in hot water, by mouth and by rectum.

Lobelia is a stimulant to the sympathetic nervous system. It improves innervation of the parts supplied by both the pneumogastric and sympathetic nerves. The appetite and digestion are augmented by it and peristalsis of the whole gastro-intestinal tube greatly stimulated. All this it does best in small and repeated doses; and for these specific purposes it should be so employed and not for its nauseating and emetic effects, which it causes by pushing this stimulation to its limit. The conditions in which such violent and disturbing action is desired are sufficiently set forth above. Specific medication has proved that lobelia is indicated by the full, slow, labored, and doughy pulse, showing that the blood current moves with difficulty. Over the chest, and particularly in the praecordium there is a sense of oppression and weight and often a dull, heavy pain or soreness of an oppressive character and always associated with difficulty in breathing. Mucous rales in the bronchi are prominent and the cough is aggravating, but followed by free and full expectoration. The tongue is full, pallid, broad and flabby-expressionless, nausea is a common indication, and sick headache with nausea frequently encountered. The sympathetic and the vagus are always below par when lobelia is indicated. With any or several of these indications lobelia proves most valuable in the gastric and respiratory disorders named below. Even in this specific field comes partly its beneficent action in angina pectoris, though relaxation even to nausea apparently intensifies its ameliorating effects.

The small dose of lobelia is of distinct value in atonic types of indigestion and dyspepsia. In similar doses it may relieve sick headache due to gastric derangement, and is then indicated by a feeling of "qualmishness" and nausea. Though sometimes overlooked when we are seeking a drug to overcome intestinal atony, experience has proved lobelia, continued for some time in moderately small doses, to be one of the best agents at our command to gradually relieve habitual constipation. Rx Specific Medicine Lobelia, 1 or 2 drops, every 2 or 3 hours. This is accomplished by improving the innervation and peristalsis, and stimulating the secretions of the intestinal glands, as lobelia is in no sense a laxative in such doses. Administered with podophyllin and

other cathartics it tends to prevent the after-constipative results that frequently follow the use of "bowel persuaders" when given in purgative amounts.

Lobelia is of value in common colds with a dry, irritative cough. It ranks with the best of antiasthmatics, and is equally serviceable in spasmodic asthma and in humid asthma, with scanty secretion in the first and over-secretion in the latter. In asthma, which is but a symptom of some grave body wrong, the urine should be examined for albumin, which, together with the asthmatic paroxysms, are sometimes the only early evidence pointing to nephritis. Nasal obstructions and deformities requiring removal by the nasal specialist should also be taken into account, as well as other causes for reflex excitation. With these absent lobelia is signally effective; it often fails in part or altogether when these abnormalities remain uncorrected. Lobelia is an equally certain remedy for the relief of spasmodic croup and the asthmatic form of acute laryngitis in children. In lobar pneumonia and in broncho-pneumonia it renders good service when there is much congestion and breathing is greatly oppressed. In chronic respiratory disorders it is valuable either to increase or decrease secretion, accordingly as the fuller or lesser doses are used, and to relieve cough. For coughs, when dry, barking, or hacking, or when loud mucous rales are heard, but there is difficulty in raising the sputum, lobelia may be employed alone, or in mixtures or syrups as indicated. For chronic coughs requiring lobelia a good form is the compound liniment of stillingia (which see), which contains the so-called oil of lobelia. For the cough of measles, when a sluggish circulation and imperfect eruption are factors, it proves useful in quieting the laryngeal irritation, controlling the catarrhal features, and more perfectly bringing out a tardy efflorescence. In both scarlet fever and measles, lobelia, by causing determination of blood to the skin, promotes the eruption when tardy and re-establishes it when retrocession occurs. It modifies many cases of whooping cough where abundant secretions of a stringy character almost strangle the sufferer. In short lobelia is a most admirable respiratory stimulant when the mucous membranes are dry, or when relaxed and secretion is free but difficult of expectoration. It should not be forgotten as one of the most valuable medicines in all stages of la grippe and epidemic influenza, as a vital stimulant, to regulate an imperfect circulation, and to control cough and expectoration. It is an admirable drug in post-grippal catarrhs, following the specific indications as given. Lobelia is seldom indicated, nor is it well borne, in advanced pulmonary tuberculosis.

It has been assumed by some that lobelia possesses the properties of an antitoxin in the sense that that term is now employed in biologic medication. This assumption we

believe to be unwarranted without definite and exact biological experimentation. Such unsupported vagaries bring into discredit otherwise good and efficient drugs. That quite remarkable results have been obtained from its use in grave blood -disorganizing and specific diseases seem probable. But lobelia is essentially a vital stimulant, and this property, more than an antitoxic action as now understood, better explains its beneficent effect in diphtheria and other depressing septicaemic diseases.

Hypodermatic Use. For the so-called antitoxic and other general action, lobelia, hypodermatically administered, has come into prominent use in late years in many of the disorders for which the drug is given internally. In this manner the probability of nausea and vomiting is lessened, while its relaxant properties seem not to be diminished. In spasmodic asthma it sometimes gives prompt relief, and we have observed its effects most beneficially in gall-stone colic of a continuously nagging, though not very severe, type. We have also observed a remarkable increase of urine from the drug used in this way. To catalogue the conditions in which many have obtained asserted good effects would be to restate all the uses of lobelia given in this article, except that of emesis.

The subject of hypodermatic medication, involving a large number of vegetable medicines, has been purposely omitted from this work. The author is unalterably opposed to this too general practice because of the dangerous reactions that occur often enough to make one cautious. Thoughtless, and often unscrupulous, commercialism in medicine on the part of a few has brought about a demand from physicians for these hypodermatic forms of medicines, and to meet this demand reputable manufacturers of drugs have unwillingly yielded and have supplied a score or more of such preparations. Realizing that such preparations under the best of pharmacal care are liable to deleterious change or disintegration, or to the development of toxic material, the thoughtful manufacturer is unwilling to continue the supply of such drugs. Certain vegetable proteins may, and often do, become as obnoxious and dangerous as some animal proteins, and may produce allergic, or anaphylactic effects, as well as direct poisoning; and occasionally the most unhappy and near fatal consequences have resulted. Apparently lobelia and ergot are the safest of these preparations and they should not be recklessly or unnecessarily used, when other methods of medication may be just as effectually employed.

Acetous Emetic Tincture. Like the Compound Emetic Powder, this agent is now seldom employed as an emetic. On the contrary its reputation rests on its value as a remedy in coughs, colds, and broncho-pulmonic complaints. It is of service when the indications

are present for both lobelia and sanguinaria. These drugs are more effective when tinctured with a certain proportion of vinegar, hence the superiority of this compound over the plain tinctures. Emetic tincture added to syrup will often render good service when a cough mixture for irritative cough, with deficient secretion, is desired. The dose of the tincture is from 20 to 60 drops.

RELATED MEDICINE.

Tobacco (*Nicotiana Tabacum*, Linné. and *Nicotine*. Tobacco was once used to a considerable extent upon painful inflammatory swellings and to relax strangulated hernia. It is seldom employed as a drug at the present day. When unaccustomed to its use in chewing and smoking it acts profoundly, causing vomiting and great depression; toleration is soon established. Nicotine is of toxicological interest chiefly, but rarely it is used to subdue pain. A solution of the combined alkaloids of tobacco, containing 1 per cent of nicotine, is on the market as *Dynamyne*, a preparation devised by Lloyd and Howe. It is a green-colored hydro-alcoholic liquid designed for external use only, a solution of 1 to 4 fluidrachms in a pint of water being applied by means of a compress upon localized inflammations, and to relieve the pains of neuralgia, pleurodynia, rheumatism, felons, abscesses, etc. Some persons are very susceptible to nicotine, hence this preparation must be used with great caution, and care should be had in handling or inhaling it. A combination of tobacco alkaloids is an ingredient of Libradol.

**The Eclectic Materia Medica, Pharmacology and Therapeutics, 1922, was
written by Harvey Wickes Felter, M.D.**